COOKIA

Journal of the Wellington Shell Club, New Zealand

VOLUME 36, NOVEMBER 2024

STRANGE MEMBERS OF THE NZ MOLLUSCAN FAUNA

GREYMOUTH COALFIELD FOSSIL SHELLS

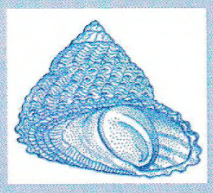
TATEIDAE ON THE RAMEKA CREEK TRACK, GOLDEN BAY

THE HISTORY OF ONE OF OUR EARLY MALACOLOGISTS

CLUB FIELD TRIP TO MAHIA PENINSULA

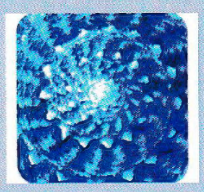
NOTES FROM ABROAD

Front cover: ***Ponderia zelandica*** (Hutton, 1873) – a juvenile specimen measuring 6mm in height. Dredged, 75m, Mercury Bay, Coromandel Peninsula. April 2024. Photo: Claire Elliot.



Outer covers logo: Cook's Turban Shell, *Cookia sulcata* (Lightfoot, 1786), from "An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand", edited by A. H. McLintock, originally published in 1966. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand.

http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/1966/27317/cooks-turban-shell-cookia-sulcata



Cookia Logo: New Zealand has a rich diversity of mollusca from the sea to the fresh waterways to the land and so the colours of water to land are expressed here. The shell image is in negative photographic form and intensified in colour to create a dramatisation of the beauty of this fauna of Aotearoa (Logo credit: Selwyn Bracegirdle).

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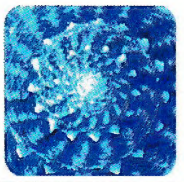

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Editorial

As I compile this edition of *Cookia*, the Olympic Games in Paris are winding down and New Zealand has done very well. We like to think our magazine is worthy of a medal, but as with our athletes, it requires a team behind it. The magazine is for the Club – it is also by the Club. We need a large team of contributors; in recent years six members have produced over half of the 80 articles. If *Cookia* is to represent and reflect our membership and interests, our active team needs to significantly expand. This year we are very happy to have items from some who had not previously contributed. Those who have not recently submitted material, please, please think of how you can help (articles, photos, graphics). If you don't feel comfortable in doing this, just ask and there will be someone who can help.

In six months' time, our Club will be celebrating its 70th anniversary and this will be featured in next year's magazine. It would be valuable to us all if those members who can recall earlier days (not necessarily 70 years) would write down relevant memories, stories and incidents from the Club's past that might otherwise be lost. All such would undoubtedly be of real value and interest to everyone.

Pete Cresswell

Acknowledgements: As in past years, I gratefully acknowledge the valued work undertaken by Roger Woods (design, layout, and editorial support), Andrew Spurgeon (providing and enhancing illustrative content) and Jill Burnet (proofing and content improvements). Thank you all. *Cookia* rests on your shoulders.

Early Collecting From Fishing Boats In Wellington

A reflection of a period unlikely to be repeated

David Cowe

My collecting of molluscs began in the 1950s, whilst at secondary school, when I was given a rock containing a fossilized chlamys.

I took it to the Geological Survey in Wellington to learn more. The paleontology branch was in a large vintage wooden house, in Boulcott Street with a large magnolia tree out front. That's where I first met Charles Fleming and Ian Keyes.

In about the late 1950's the entire Geological Survey shifted to Central Lower Hutt. By that time, I had been collecting mainly fossil mollusca from the Wairarapa and after school was visiting the Survey to try and identify my specimens by using their reference collection. Through this process I realized that some of the fossil specimens I was collecting were still living and existing on our seashores; this brought about my starting a Recent collection.

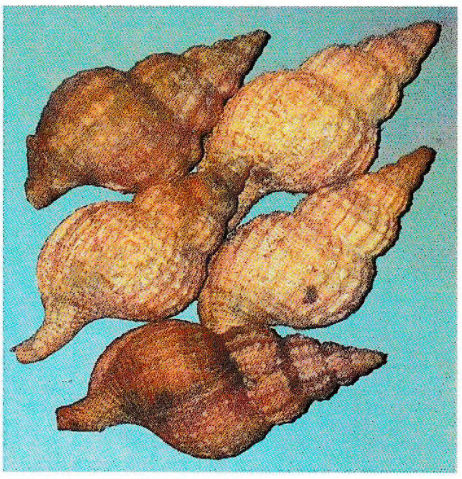
My interest in fossils in those early days was shared by Alan Beu and Winston Ponder, who had been at Hutt Valley High School with me. We all belonged to the Wellington Shell Club. Car trips home after club meetings were always courtesy of Mr Hosking with the passengers me, Alan, Winston and Dick Dell.

Years later at a club meeting at the old Dominion Museum I was given an *Alcithoe larochei* with the locality as 'Cook Strait trawler'.

At the time I was living in Wellington's Tinakori Road within an easy walk to the wharves, which made me think I might be able to connect with one of the trawlers myself. So, one Sunday afternoon I walked to the wharves and struck up a conversation with a chap who was working on one. That is how I met 'Bill' who was the skipper of a trawler called *Takahe*. I asked him if they brought up shells when working out at sea and if they did could he set some aside for me. He was a little suspicious at the beginning, a large Scotsman being questioned by me standing alongside his boat. However, he said he would bring some shells back and through him I also later met George of the *Cerego*, and Peter of the *Tamaras* along with many others.

The shells they began bringing in for me included *Alcithoe larochei larochei, Alcithoe larochei ostenfeldi, Astraea heliotropium, Fusitriton laudandus, Maurea selecta, Maurea waikanae, Penion ormesi,* and *Ranella olearium.*

***Alcithoe* - likely two species**



***Fusitriton laudandus* Finlay, 1926**

The localities tended to be off Castlepoint, north of Kapiti Island, Palliser Bay, off Kaikoura and off Cape Campbell. Depths were 20 fathoms down to 100 fathoms. Occasionally, very large rocks came up and in crevices of these were *Cardita distorta, Hiatula nitida, Irus reflexus, Pholadidea suteri, Zelithophaga truncata*, and *Zemysina striatula.*

Often the decks weren't washed down, and I also collected the material left there – to be taken home and later seived. On the trawler *Ho Ho,* the trawl boards were hollow steel plate with holes large enough to catch material and get my hands into enabling the removal of more material. This was also washed down and sifted. Species found from these crevices included *Aoteadrillia wanganuiensis, Arthritica hulmei, Emarginula striatula, Gonimyrtea concinna, Haliris setosa, Monodilepas monolifera.cookiana, Poroleda lanceolata, Saccella maxwelli* and *Syrnola menda.*

The trawlers tended to berth early on Friday mornings, and I would check them for finds on my way to work and again on my way home at the end of the day. Friday night was 'boil up' to remove gastropod animals. It was about this time a young Bruce Marshall arrived to live in Wellington and he would often call around and to give much help with the identification of items.

Moored beside the trawlers in Wellington was the *Picton,* a blue cod fishing boat. I was offered a trip of about two weeks over the Mernoo Bank. Along the starboard side were six pairs of turning wheels, each had a man standing alongside. On each line were about six - eight baited hooks that were dropped over the side of the ship. Successful catches of many fish were repeatedly pulled up! As we moved to the next fishing spot the fish were gutted on board, with me at the final cleaning area doing the 'washing out' of the gutted fish and able to search for specimens! Most stomach contents were *Mesopeplum convexum, Talochlamys gemmulata,* and *Talochlamys zealandiae.* Other species included *Lima zelandica, Maurea benthicola*, and a huge number of Chitons! Depths ranged from 28 - 50 fathoms.

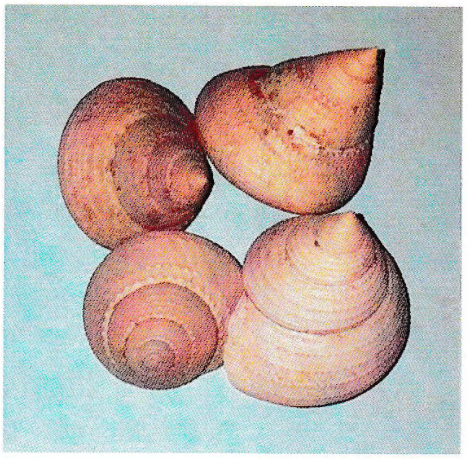
***Mesopeplum convexum* (Quoy & Gaimard, 1835**

***Talochlamys dichroa* (Suter, 1909)**

The same boat, *Picton* was arranged to sail to Pitt Island, just off the Chatham Islands, to butcher cattle and bring back the meat for pet food. The skipper, Alan Aberdien, generously offered me a trip. I was keen to go, mainly to hopefully get an opportunity to collect specimens at the 'Flower Pot' fossil locality, which I did. Some nice items found there included *Chama pittensis* and *Trivia flora.* I do remember the *Picton* tying up at Waitangi and the crew, along with a couple of butchers, racing to the Waitangi Hotel. Above the bar was a shelf displaying a long line of amazing Argonauta! Sadly, on a later return visit, I discovered those beautiful shells were no longer in the bar.

Back at the Wellington wharves, in port alongside our trawlers were those from Japan. I made contact with a young man on the *Ooe Maru,* who agreed to bring back shells from out at sea in return for some paua shells I had. Upon his return some weeks later, he had collected some nice specimens with localities new to my collection. He had also spent time using the paua shell I had given him to create a small box about 10 by 8 cm, laminated with a fine mosaic of polished paua shell pieces, each about 10 mm square. A quite beautiful little treasure.

I also contacted other Japanese trawlers which were fishing in localities around New Zealand, and down to Snares Islands, at a depth of up to 150 metres. Some species brought back included *Alcithoe wilsonae, Charonia lampas, Zygochlamys delicatula, Cominella mirabilis, Euciroa galatheae, Maurea blacki, Murexsul octogonus*, and *Xenophora neozelanica. neozelanica.*



***Maurea blacki* (Powell, 1950)**

***Acesta maui* BA Marshall, 2001**

About this time, it was arranged for myself, and my wife Kay, to visit the Russian research vessel *Poseidon* that was in the Wellington port. It was there that I was amazed to see numerous *Acesta maui.* I was given some and later arranged with Frank Climo of the then Dominion Museum to supply some preservatives to give to the Russian scientists aboard to bring some *Acesta* specimens back for the museum.

Some weeks later Frank received the *Acesta* specimens from the Russian trawler, but in another preservative. . . not the alcohol he had provided. Apparently, his preservative had been drunk one evening on the trip!!?

At the same time as collecting recent material, I maintained my fossil collecting in the Wairarapa, often with Alan Beu and Bruce Marshall. We collected at the then known fossil localities in the area. One new site, unique to me, was a recent road cutting through siltstone at the crest of Te Wharau Road, east of Gladstone.

Work had halted over the Christmas break and the new flat siltstone surface had many tiny pinnacles that had formed whilst being protected under the small molluscs on top, all waiting for me to pick them! Bruce and I revisited soon after and were kindly aided by a helpful bulldozer driver who happened to be working at the site. There is a large, nice microfauna there. Much of the collecting was taking blocks and washing down with a sieve.

By this time my family were living in the Wairarapa and visiting trawlers was no longer possible. Instead, I returned to other old favourite localities such as the Hurupi Series and Lake Ferry (Onoke) at Palliser Bay which were visited often, along with localities in Whanganui, South Taranaki and Hawkes Bay.

Fossil collecting has been part of my life since I was a young boy, with many happy memories and special finds! My personal collection has been a joyful challenge over the years and has just been donated to Te Papa Museum where I hope it can be used and enjoyed by others.

Strange members of the New Zealand Molluscan Fauna

Eric Scott

Heather and I have been doing quite a bit of sifting through grit from various sites around NZ. In our search for the molluscs within, we come across various unusual members of our molluscan fauna, which seldom get much mention and certainly don't rank among the more sought-after families such as Volutidae, Tudiclidae, Muricidae etc. I have selected 3 groups that we sometimes see under the microscope[1].

TEREDINIDAE

These are the infamous shipworms that have created havoc around the world, boring into submerged wooden structures and causing the collapse of those structures over time. They are sometimes referred to as the termites of the sea. The most commonly known genus worldwide is *Teredo* but here in New Zealand the most common genus is *Bankia*.

***Bankia neztalia* - R.D. Turner & McKoy, 1979; Motueka – calcareous tube, 154mm & valve (pair & single), 7.8mm Note the rasp-like surface of the valves that it uses for boring into the wood.**

Teredinidae sp. Waipipian[2] fossil, Mangere Wastewater excavations.

They are notoriously difficult to identify and can only be done with any certainty from their pallets. These animals have 2 valves at their anterior end, which have rasp-like surfaces that they use for boring into the wood. The 2 valves of course, place them in the Bivalvia class and are the shells most likely to be found when sifting through the grit.

As they burrow into the wood, they line the burrow with a calcareous tube that can sometimes be retrieved from washed up driftwood. At the posterior end, the burrow opening, they have a pair of calcareous appendages that they use for blocking the opening after the animal withdraws when disturbed. These appendages are referred to as pallets and are unique to each species hence the only way of identifying the species with any certainty. Yet I have never come across any in sifting through the grit, but examples are well illustrated in Powell's book on p430. As these "worms" bore into the wood they digest the cellulose by way of bacteria in an organ called the "Gland of Deshayes". According to Wikipedia they have a lifespan of 1–3 years. The average length they grow to is 10-15cm. The larger Teredo worms can grow up to 1m long and in some South-East Asian cultures, are considered a delicacy with a taste ranging from milk to oysters! Apparently, according to Wikipedia, they are eaten raw after marinating in vinegar or limejuice with chopped chili peppers and onions. I'm not sure if that will catch on here!

Vermicularia maoriana Powell, 1937

This species was first discovered in the 1930's off the Three Kings Islands at a depth of 260 meters. It is an unusual shell that is attached to a foreign object. The holotype is only 2.4mm in height with a diameter of 1.1mm. The shell itself is spirally coiled and the aperture has a flange-like continuous peristome which appears as varices at the various stages of its growth.

***Vermicularia maoriana* Powell, 1937 Off Three Kings Islands, Northland.730m. 5.0mm**

[1] All the specimens illustrated are from my personal collection. ES.

[2] The Waipipian (Wp) is a stage of the Wanganui epoch of the Cenozoic Era: 3.1-3.6 million years (mya)

***Vermicularia sp.* Poor Knights Islands, Northland. 20-25m. 3.3 & 1.7mm**

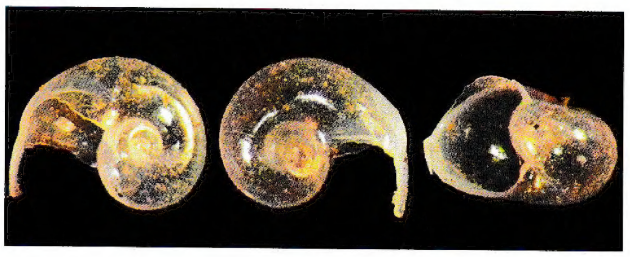
When Powell named it, he was unsure of what family it belonged to, as it was not a typical *Vermicularia.* He therefore provisionally placed it in the family Vermetidae. In his book it is referenced as being *incertae sedis* (of uncertain placement). Since then, it has been provisionally placed into the Turritellidae family. However, according to MolluscaBase (WoRMS), its status is shown as 'uncertain > taxon inaquirendum (polychaete). There is also an editor's comment that says, "This species was considered *incertae sedis* by Beier & Petit (2011:36"), a status here confirmed. It belongs in the Phylum **Annelida**, yet it is as present not clear where it should be positioned. In this respect the status *incertae sedis* is here maintained.

If it is an annelid why it is still not under that phylum, rather than the Molluscan one even given its *incertae sedis* status?

In the meantime, I will continue to enjoy the beauty of such a microscopic species irrespective of where it belongs.

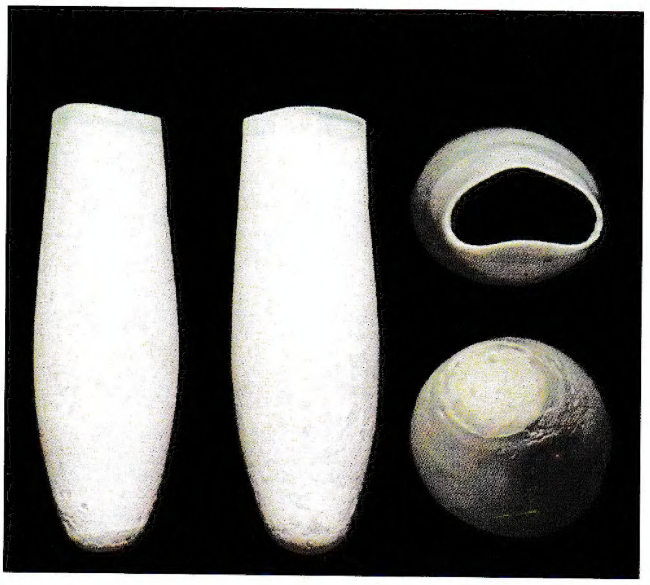
EUTHECOSOMATA

These are the "Sea Butterflies" of which New Zealand has quite a range spanning several families. They are the "shelled" suborder of the Pteropoda order as opposed to the Gymnosomata suborder, members of which have no shell and make up only a small proportion of this group (7%). According to Wikipedia the Euthecosomans are the sole food source of their relatives the Gymnosomans – what a life! Thecosomans live within the top 25m of the world's oceans where they spend their whole life in the plankton zone (holoplanktonic). They are a major food source for various marine species and their shells form an important part in the oceanic calcium cycle, making up as much as 12% of the global carbonate flux (Wikipedia).



***Heliconoides inflatus* (d'Orbigny, 1836); Off Three Kings Islands, Northland, at 730m – 1.6mm. In family Heliconoididae.**

***Limacina retroversa* (Fleming, 1823). Off Otago Peninsula. 550-619m -1.5mm. In Family Limacinidae.**



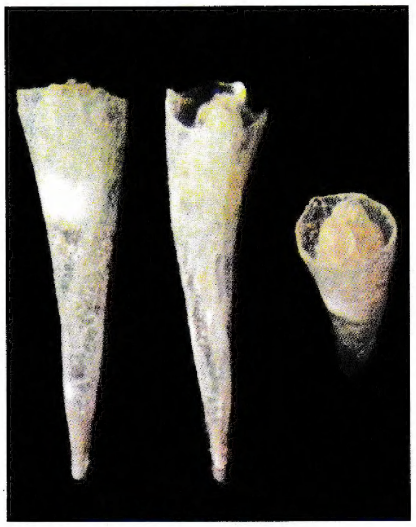
***Cuvierina columella* (Rang, 1827). Off Poor Knights Islands, Northland.**

***Cavolinia inflexa* - (Lesueur, 1813); Cavalli Islands, Northland, at 90m. 5.7mm. In Family Cavoliniidae.**

Cavolinia tridentata **(Forsskal, 1775); Off Bream Head, Northland, at 150m - 14.5mm. In Family Cavoliniidae.**

***Clio sp.*. Opoitian fossil[3] in sea cliff matrix at Kaawa Beach, Waikato. Length: 3.4mm. In Family Cliidae.**

Cresseis conica **– Eschscholtz, 1829; North Cape, Northland 73m. 2.4mm. In Family Creseidae.**



Styliola subula **– (Quoy & Gaimard, 1827) Off Poor Knights Islands, Northland at 20 - 25m.1.3mm. In Family Creseidae.**

Shells from this group are quite common in dredgings from deep water and I can say that we have sifted out several specimens from at least 90% of all the grit we have sifted through. While they float around in the plankton zone at the mercy of the oceanic currents, their foot has grown two wing-like appendages called parapodia, which they use to "fly" slowly through the water in a vertical ascent / descent hence the name "Sea Butterflies". According to Wikipedia, little is known about their feeding habits, but it is generally understood that they are passive herbivores, entangling their food in a mucous web, many times larger than they, which is abandoned when disturbed.

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Powell, A.W.B.(1937). New species of marine Mollusca from New Zealand. *Discovery Reports.* 15: 153–222, pls 45 –56. [Published 16 March 1937]., *available online at* http://biodiversitylibrary.org/page/5648304 Cited on-line in MolluscaBase

Powell, A.W.B, 1979. *New Zealand Mollusca.* Wm Collins, Auckland.

[3] The Opoitian (Wo) is a stage of the Wanganui Epoch of the Cenozoic Era: from 5.3-3.7 mya.

Sphaerium cf novaezelandiae Deshayes, 1853

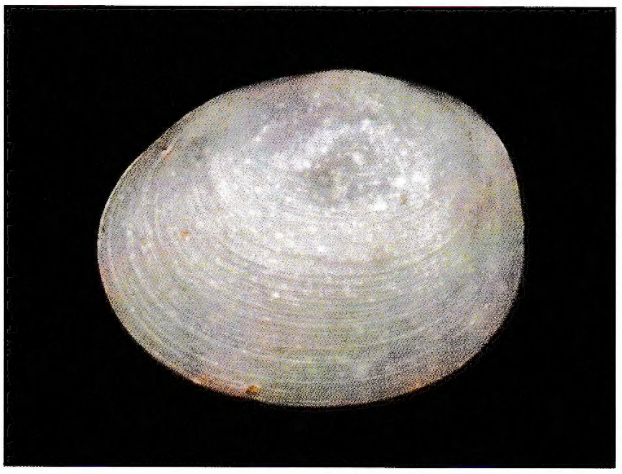
Found living in Twin Forks Cave, Patarau, Nelson

Pete Cresswell

On 30 December 2023, I was one of a small group who visited the Twin Forks Cave in Patarau, Nelson. The group included two, long-time Vietnamese friends visiting from Denmark. Apart from creating an experience for our visitors, we were hoping to collect tateid snails.

The water level was particularly low – Nelson, at that time, experiencing a prolonged dry spell – which gave ready access to the cave interior. Samples of fine sandy silt were obtained at various places up to some 150m inside the cave, where one of the visitors, Tuan Minh, collected a 1 litre sample.

This sample yielded very little material of interest except for a single, live bivalve and one detached valve both of a species of *Sphaerium*.

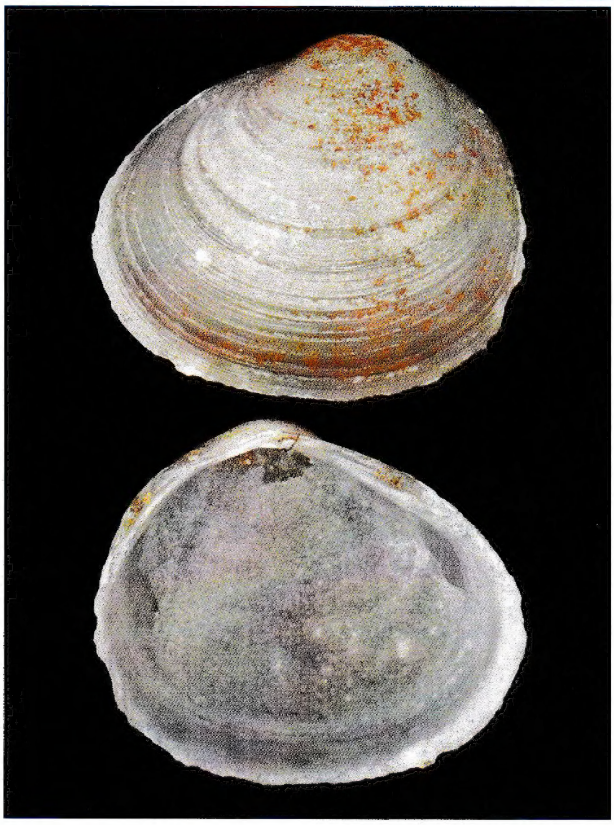


The live sphaeriid: 1.8mm in length. Photo: A.S.

Clearly, the smaller was living in the cave, but, whether it was part of a confirmed colony or was washed in from an outside habitat is not yet determined, although the immediate assumption would have to be the latter. If so it must have survived for some reasonably extended period – given the prevailing dry climate and low water level. It would have to have been washed in months earlier.

There are no records of established Sphaeriidae populations living in New Zealand caves (*Kerry Walton, personal communication 13 May 2024*) – although the literature suggests they inhabit caves in Europe and an entirely troglobitic species has been described from Casa da Pedra cave, Brazil.

It would be presumptuous to suggest what we found indicates a troglobitic population, but it is intriguing enough to warrant another visit to Twin Forks.



Exterior and interior of the single right valve: length of 2.9mm. Photo: A.S.

Acknowledgement:

The photographic skill of colleague Andrew Spurgeon (A.S.) is gratefully acknowledged.

Relevant literature which may be of interest:

Hazelton, M. 1974. The fauna from some of the Irish Caves. *Transactions of the Cave Research Group Great Britain* **15**: 191-197

Knight, Lee and Wood, Paul. Bivalves (Pisidiidae) in English caves. Cave and Karst Science Vol 27, No.2, August 2000. Transaction of the British Cave Research Association.

Rassam H, Moutaouakil S, Benaissa H, Albrecht C, Ghamizi M (2020) First record of Pisidium subtruncatum Malm, 1855 (Bivalvia, Sphaeriidae) in an African cave. Subterranean Biology 34: 99–108. https://doi.org/10.3897/subtbiol.34.50916

Simone LRL, Ferreira RL (2022) *Eupera troglobia* sp. nov.: the first troglobitic bivalve from the Americas (Mollusca, Bivalvia, Sphaeriidae). *Subterranean Biology* 42: 165-184. https://doi.org/10.3897/subtbiol.42.78074

Australian National Shell Show, 2024

Kris Woods

We arrived at Perth International Airport and stepped outside the terminal into the 43° mid-afternoon February sun. The intense day-time heat persisted for the next week, although we found ourselves adjusting quickly and began to relish this warmth each day. After exiting the airport, we drove 35 kms across the city to our accommodation in the vibrant coastal suburb of Fremantle, the venue for the 17th Australian National Shell Show commencing the following day. Following check-in, a cold drink was a high priority with dinner secondary to our needs.

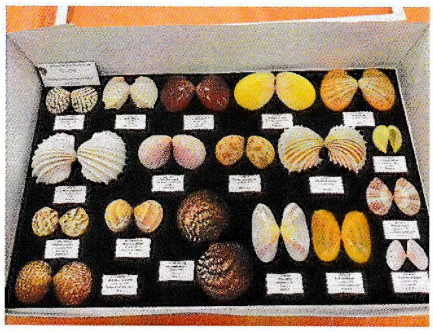
The South Fremantle Football Club was the spacious and well-appointed venue for the 17th Australian National Shell Show. Friday 16th February was set-up day for dealers and displays, with competition judging from 4.00 pm. We took the car on this first day because I had shell displays and trays but on the subsequent days we walked the easy 15 minutes from the hotel.

The West Australian Shell Club hosted the show with 35 display categories.

I entered three categories receiving a first in World Wide Bivalves, plus two seconds making the effort worthwhile.

A very small section of the show

Beyond the competition my main motive was to connect with fellow enthusiasts, catch-up with old friends, meet people I've only met online, and make new friends. Of course to enjoy the shell displays, the standard of which was very high. Also, visiting Western Australia again was an



My entry of world-wide bivalves – which gained first prize

opportunity too good to miss.

The doors were open to the public on Saturday and Sunday with the show buzzing on both days. The show attracted local shell enthusiasts, others from Australia and some from as far afield as Southeast Asia, the United States and Europe.

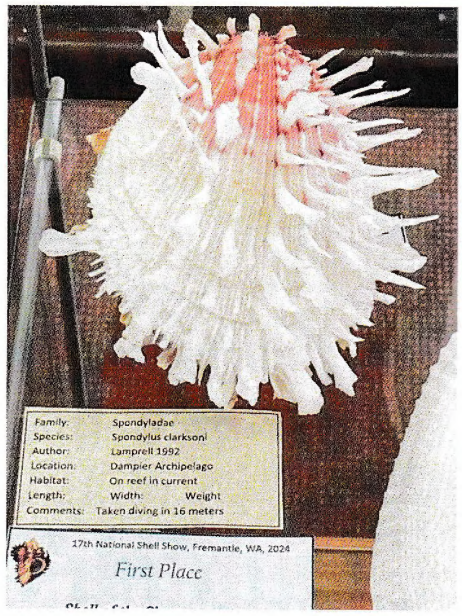
The venue's proximity to the busy Fremantle weekend markets attracted many casual visitors and provided an entertaining distraction for my husband Roger, a long-time shell collector's supporter. He and others from the show also joined the small crowd in the covered grandstand on Saturday afternoon watching a women's football match between two local teams.

The competitive shell displays were complemented by an abundance of dealers with 26 names listed on the programme. With good international representation most dealers were Australian, including some from Western Australia who only trade at

Dealer tables

this shell show. More than one dealer commented that Fremantle was a prime opportunity for a get together and the best place anywhere in the world to trade *Zoilas,* a sought-after genus of Cypraeidae (cowrie shells) found in western and southern Australia[1]. A personal highlight of the

Examples of the cowrie genus *Zoila*



Bivalve "Shell of the Show"

Saturday afternoon programme was a captivating video presentation by Dave Watts of his shell collecting scuba dives in Hawaii.

The dinner and awards presentation took place on Saturday evening at the venue. A bar, which was open during both days, proved very popular with a variety of chilled alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks available after another warm day.

[1] Australia has 16 species of *Zoila*, 19 of the allied genus *Barycyprarea* (Recent and fossil) and 17 of the genus *Umbilia-*, also Recent and fossil. An impressive number indeed! Ed.

'Tame' python getting to know a visiting human

One surprise highlight of the evening was from Ranger Red, owner of a nearby wildlife park and a friend of Merv Cooper, WA Shell Club President, who brought along his python. The non-venomous snake was in a small wooden box which nobody noticed until it was removed near the end of the evening then draped around the neck of anyone brave enough to touch the creature. Taking photos was as close as I got, much to Roger's disappointment who wanted to see it draped it around my neck!

An addition to the official programme was a field trip to Woodman Point, near Rockingham, an hour south of Perth which was organised for low tide at 6.00 am on Monday. Afterwards all were invited to Merv Cooper's shell dealer warehouse at his home in Rockingham for a debrief and morning coffee, followed by a lunchtime BBQ.

We were also treated to an extravaganza of shells and other marine curiosities including a terrarium featuring numerous small crabs. A sociable and pleasurable end to another successful show.

Post-lunch, we journeyed south to Busselton to kick-start our week-long exploration of southern Western Australia, concluding our adventure in the sea-side town of Albany on the south coast.

Looking ahead, the 18th Australian National Shell Show is scheduled for January 2025 in Adelaide, South Australia - a gathering not to be missed by shell enthusiasts.

Primum venire

Essentially for those who like to come first

Selwyn Bracegirdle

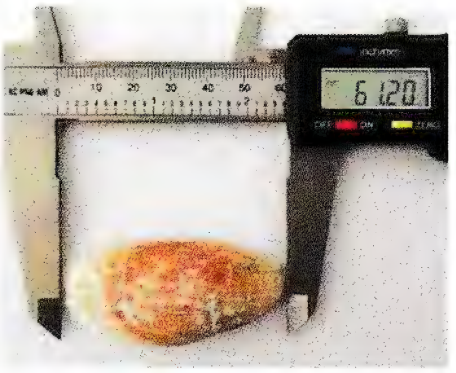
There exists, on the Auckland Shell Club website, a 'Register of Largest New Zealand Shells'. If you like the idea of appearing in this register, then read on….

It is a living document, because as specimens are found, old and new, and measured, new records find their way onto the register. What shells might you have that are in fact the largest in New Zealand collections?

Condition is not important - it is the size. But it needs to be identifiable. And when it comes to bivalves, just a single valve is all that is required. How many huge valves have been left on a beach because of condition and that there was only one valve?

I remember several years ago finding a big *Myadora striata* (Quoy & Gaimard, 1835) after a tropical storm towards the west end of Ohope Beach. Measuring it, I discovered I had collected a New Zealand record sized specimen. What joy at having a record sized shell and that I had found it myself. But my elation was short-lived because someone found they had an even bigger one not long afterwards.

However, I think I have done it again. On 1 September 2023 collecting along Ocean Beach, Mount Maunganui, out from Grove Avenue, there was a lot of material revealed at low tide. A significant volume of the shells were large broken pieces, but among this debris were occasional specimens worth picking up. Something caught my eye, not because of condition, but rather for its size – *Maoricrypta costata* (G.B. Sowerby I, 1824).

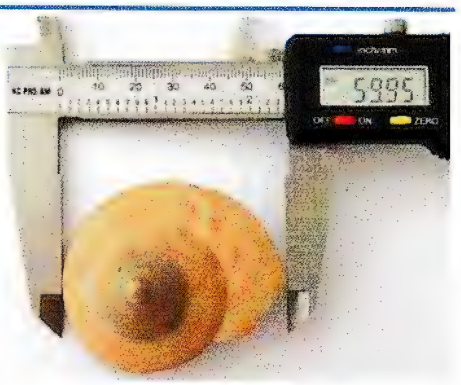


Maoricrypta costata
(G.B. Sowerby I, 1824).

It was in rough condition but huge: measuring 61.2mm.

A recent addition to the list was a new record for *Maurea waikanae* (Oliver, 1926) from New Zealand deep water. Alas, the location is unknown.

Helpfully, the *Auckland Shell Club - Conchology Section, Auckland*



***Maurea waikanae* (Oliver, 1926)**

Museum Institute gives guidelines relating to record sized shells. Submissions are welcome from anyone with New Zealand shells.

These should be e-mailed to aucklandshellclub@gmail.com with the information both in the guidelines and written out in the article by Peter Poortman in *Cookia* Vol 35 Page 31.

So, check your collection, you never know - such fun!

Greymouth Coalfield Fossil Snails

Dr Karin Mahlfeld

Last year, Jean-Claude Stahl (Te Papa) made me aware of some interesting fossils mentioned by the geologist Maxwell Gage in his 1952 report on the Greymouth Coalfield. In this report, Gage mentions plant, freshwater and land snail fossils found in three mudstone formations and a number of horizons. The nature of the deposits and the fossils indicate an alternate fluviatile to lacustrine paleo -environment which existed during late Cretaceous to early Paleocene in the area where the fossils were found. After some searching in GNS's online database of fossils called FRED and with the kind help of Chris Clowes (GNS), I was able to track down the land snail fossil fragments Gage collected from a spoil heap of the mining operations. The fossils seemed to have languished in GNS's collections without attracting much notice ever since. Kerry Walton (Te Papa) kindly borrowed the specimens for me and took some photographs as did Chris Cloves. Gage identified the land snail fossils as *'Paryphanta'*; however, nowadays *Powelliphanta* O'Connor, 1945 snails are recognised as a distinct genus from kauri snails, which are restricted to Northland.

Figure 1. One of the fossil fragments collected by Maxwell Gage next to a Te Papa specimen of *Powelliphanta gagei* (Powell, 1938). Image taken by Kerry Walton.

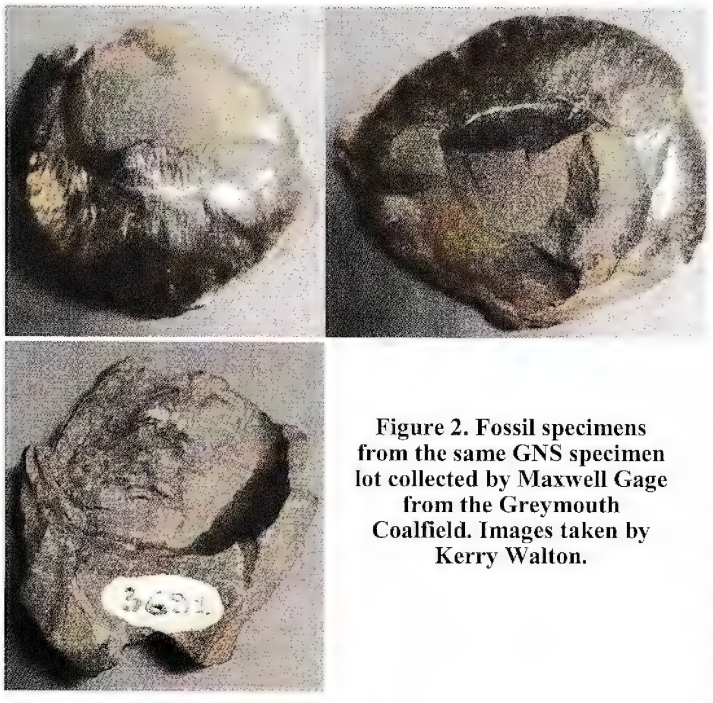


Figure 2. Fossil specimens from the same GNS specimen lot collected by Maxwell Gage from the Greymouth Coalfield. Images taken by Kerry Walton.

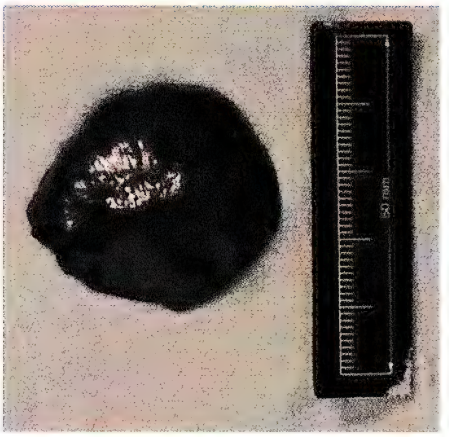


Figure 3. Fossil specimen from the same specimen lot as above. Image taken by Chris Clowes (GNS).

Some of the fragments tantalisingly resemble in size and shape the extant *Powelliphanta gagei* (Powell, 1938), which made me even more curious. Given the circumstantial evidence of the paleo-environment, the presence of other freshwater snails, mussels and numerous plant fossils at the same sites and modern genetic analyses of rhytidid snails, which put the origins of these carnivorous snails in the Cretaceous, it seems plausible that these could be *Powelliphanta* fossils. The next step will be a visit to Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment's drill core storage warehouse to inspect cores from the Greymouth Coalfield, which are reported to contain snail fossils. I'll keep you posted. Freshwater snails have been reported from the Cretaceous Warder Formation in the middle Clarence Valley, Marlborough by Alan Beu, Bruce Marshall and Miles Reay in 2014. (see reference below)

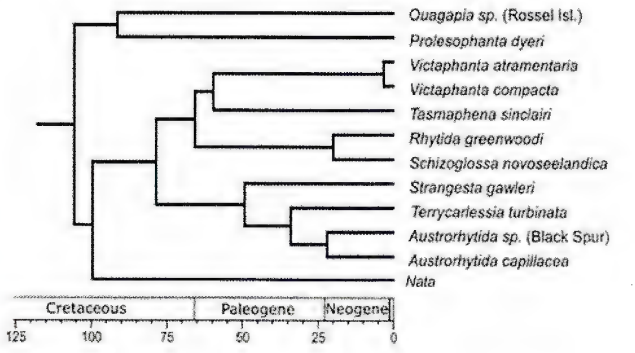


Figure 4. Simplified phylogeny of rhytidid snails after Herbert & Moussalli (2016, fig,. 1).

For your interest I also provide a link to a video showing the geological evolution of the SW Pacific since the last 120 Million years: Pacific Ocean paleobathymetry from 120 Ma to the present, reconstructed using pyBacktrack1.4 (youtube.com)

References

Beu, A.G., Marshall, B.A. and Reay, M.B., 2014. Mid-Cretaceous (Albian–Cenomanian) freshwater mollusca from the Clarence Valley, Marlborough, New Zealand, and their biogeographical significance. *Cretaceous Research*, 49, pp.134-151.

Cornwallis Beach, Auckland

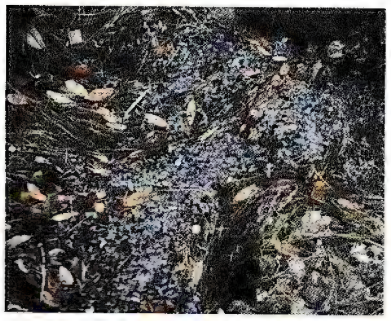
A consistent locality for molluscs of interest

Javier Couper

In my past seven years living in Auckland, Cornwallis is probably my most frequently visited beach. It has a long history of many fascinating species being found there such as *Antalis nana*, *Cleidothaerus albidus*, *Cominella accuminata*, *Melanochlamys lorrainae*, *Ostrea equestris* and even the elusive (intertidally) *Cabestana tabulata*.

The sort of habitat where I found the *C. tabulata*.

Even so, I have found Cornwallis and the walk along to Puponga Point to be a very 'hit or miss' locality. There have been times I visited, and the rocks were almost devoid of anything interesting, and other times where the rocks are covered in Cymatiidae and Calliostomatidae, the sandflats are filled with Cephalaspidea and Ancillariidae, and further around to Puponga Point there are many *Ranella australasia*, *Penion sulcatus* and *Haliotis iris*.



The bluebottle density wasn't quite this high everywhere, but you get the point.

On 10 March 2024, Winston, an international student from China studying at the University of Auckland, and I travelled to Cornwallis to catch an extra low tide. It was a fair, mostly sunny day, ideal day for collecting, with the only issue being millions of juvenile bluebottles, *Physalia physalis* everywhere. Quite a challenge to avoiding being stung.

After doing the obligatory walk to the tip and back to the wharf to check the view, water visibility, and see if any fishermen have dumped worthwhile shells as they occasionally do, we made our way south to the rocks. I remember thinking to check every *Cabestana* in case it was a *C. tabulata*. I was very doubtful I'd find one. To my surprise and elation, I did find a *C. tabulata*. I only noticed it because I was investigating a larger *Cabestana spengleri* about 20cm away and I noticed a small *Cabestana* with a hairy periostracum. I couldn't believe my eyes, so I snapped a couple of photos and then grabbed it to compare with some nearby *C. spengleri* . Indeed, it was a *C. tabulata*.

***Cabestana tabulata*, *in situ*.**

My next goal will be to find a live *Cominella accuminata* or *Alcithoe arabica* in the Manukau; the latter may however not be possible as Morley *et al* (2011) claims that it may no longer be present in the Manukau. Other than the *C. tabulata*, some other finds of note included:

-*Maurea punctulata*, was plentiful - mostly among sponges near the low tide mark, but others a bit farther up the intertidal zone.

Ventral view of *Cabestana tabulata*.

- A single strikingly marked, hermit crabbed, *Maurea tigris* with *Maoricrypta sodalis* inside. Possibly hundreds of *Cabestana spengleri* on and under rocks, usually right next to sand.

-Dozens of *Monoplex parthenopeus* with the *C. spengleri*.

-Quite a few *Ranella australasia* out in the open on rocks and in crevices around Puponga Point.

-A *Haliotis iris* under a rock at Puponga Point.

-Dozens, likely hundreds if I had looked, of *Maoricolpus roseus* among coralline algae on rocks.

-A *Eudoxochiton nobilis* on low tide rocks.

This is arguably one of the richest and most conchologically diverse areas in Auckland.

A beautifully coloured *Maurea tigris*.

***Ranella australasia* from low tide rocks.**

The History Of One Of Our Early Malacologists

The Reverend William Henry Webster B.A.

The Logbooks of William Henry Webster 1850—1931

Kevin Burch *(author's comments in italics)*

Much of this paper was compiled by Keith Giles, Auckland Institute and Museum. I have been able to correct, and add more information, not available to him, from our extensive genealogical records.

Auckland Central Library Special Collections has been home to two manuscript log books written by Midshipman William H Webster for as long as anyone cares to remember. But exactly who he was, and how the logbooks came into the possession of Special Collections has always been a bit of a mystery.

William Henry Webster (Cyclopaedia of New Zealand: Auckland, 1902)

There are, however, a number of clues. The first is a pencil inscription on the flyleaf of volume one, which reads "Upton Hall, Cheshire"; and the second is a faint signature on the reverse of one of the sketches in volume two that could possibly be "Rev Webster". Both volumes have been stamped with an Auckland Public Library date-stamp for 10 May 1943. According to the Library Donation Book for 10 August 1939 to 10 June 1948, the "Two Log books of HMS *Pearl*" were donated by "Mrs Seymour" of the "Valuation Dept, Town Hall" on 3 May 1943. They were allocated the donation number 9889. The library committee formally accepted the gift on 10 May 1943, and the logbooks were given the manuscript numbers 2 and 3. At a later stage they were re-classified as books at classmark RBR (Rare Book Room) 915, before being re-catalogued once more as MS (manuscript) 250. But although Auckland City Archives holds a partial card index for early Council employees, "Mrs Seymour" does not feature, and the key to uncovering more about William H Webster actually proved to be the 1902 edition of The Cyclopaedia of New Zealand. This provided a basic biography, which I have expanded below by reference to the logbooks and to various other sources. *In fact, Mrs Violet Mary Seymour was the Rev. Webster's eldest child and only daughter. She was born in Cambridge, England in 1875.*

William Henry Webster was born on 1 October 1850 at Upton Hall, near Woodchurch on the Wirral Peninsula in Cheshire, England. *His father was the Squire of Upton Hall, his older brother became the new Squire, William being sent to sea as an officer cadet. Family records tell us that the Websters were a very wealthy and prominent family, their estate covered 532 acres! (from the 1841 census). This was very large for the times, and by far the largest holding in the Upton area, the next being a mere 164 acres!*

He joined the Royal Navy in 1864 and served as a midshipman aboard HMS *Pearl* - a 17-gun, steam corvette of 1469 tons - from 5 May 1866, with brief periods of service on HMS *Rattler* (5 October – 22 December 1866), HMS *Osprey* (23 December 1866 – 2 January 1867) and HMS *Agincourt* (3 December 1870 – 14 April 1871).

From 5 May 1866 to 14 April 1871, William kept a log of his naval service, and it is this log that is now in the possession of Special Collections. On the whole, it is a dry and unimaginative record of navigational information and routine duties, lacking any personal commentary. But the skilfully drawn charts, and impressive sketches and watercolours that pepper its pages more than make up for its mundanity. *I must comment on this observation. I have in my archives two book bound volumes of the proceedings of the Linnean Society of New South Wales, dating from 1892 to 1903. The first volume has only papers written by Charles Hedley;+ the second volume contains papers by Hedley & Henry Suter, Professor Ralph Tate & W.L May.*

These books contain countless beautifully drawn pencil sketches by William. They, along with other very valuable literature, were given to me by our old friend, Dr A.W. Baden Powell.

The *Pearl* arrived in Singapore in October 1866 and spent the next four years in the seas around South East Asia, China and Japan. The tour of duty coincided with complex power struggles and civil war in Japan, and William witnessed the bombardment of Hakodate by the Japanese Imperial Fleet in 1869. His log contains a pencil sketch of the offensive (20 June 1869), whilst another of his sketches of the event was reproduced in the London Illustrated News on 11 September 1869.

After leaving the Navy in 1873, with the rank of sub-lieutenant, William studied at St John's Theological College, Cambridge, graduating in 1876/7 with a Bachelor of Arts degree. He was ordained a deacon in 1876, and a priest in 1878. (This explains the signature "Rev. Webster" on the reverse of the sketch of the Mikado's fleet and western ships at anchor in Awomori Bay interleaved with the log of 17 May 1869).

His first appointment was to the curacy of West Exe, Devon, 1876-8, then Pitt Portion, Tiverton, 1878-80. In 1880-81, he was assistant curate of Westfield, Sussex, and he appears as such, now married and with four young children. *The eldest son born there in 1876 was William George Matthews Webster, my grandfather, whose youngest daughter was my mother. The Rev.William's other sons Harold 1878, and Francis 1879, were also born in Devon. This information is from the 1881 British census.*

William had married Mary Stubbs, the niece of Dr William Stubbs, Bishop of Oxford, the celebrated academic and historian, in the March quarter of 1874, and a sketch of "My Sweetheart" can be found at the back of volume two of the logbooks.

Pencil drawing by W H Webster: "My Sweetheart"

In 1881 William was appointed curate in charge of Cocking in Sussex, leaving there in 1882 to become chaplain to the English community at Bonn in Germany. His fifth child, Godfrey Egerton Webster, was born in 1884 in Bonn. *While in Bonn, the Rev. Webster served as English Consul and as such, was English tutor to the Kaiser's son. Grandfather William George M. Webster had his lessons from his father and was a classmate of the Kaiser's son. I can remember him telling me about this when I was young in the 1950s.*

From 1889 to 1890 he was Assistant Secretary to the Additional Curates' Society (Western District) and Organising Secretary (Midlands District) from 1890 to 1892. In 1892 he was appointed curate of Holy Trinity church Launceston, Tasmania, subsequently becoming vicar of Sheffield, Tasmania in 1895, then rector of Bothwell in 1896. By August 1899 he had arrived in New Zealand where he took up the post of vicar of Waiuku. In 1902 he stepped down to concentrate on farming and other activities, but was granted permission to officiate in the diocese of Auckland between 1903 and 1906. He then lived in Maunsell Street, Parnell.

In 1909 he and his wife returned to England, where he took the post of curate of St Mary's, Hoxton, London from 1910 to 1912. There followed a brief term as curate of St John's, Hampstead (from 1912 to 1913), and the rectorship of Bradden, Northamptonshire from 1913 to 1922. William then appears to have retired to the south coast, living out his final years in a bungalow that he had had built at Barton-on-Sea, Hampshire in 1928, and which he named "Eocene".

Eocene might seem an odd name for a house, but it is a clue to the Reverend Webster's extra-ecclesiastical interests. It is a geological term referring to the second epoch of the Tertiary period; the Eocene beds near Barton-on-Sea are particularly rich in fossil shells and the Reverend Webster's abode very likely takes its name from the nearby sequence of Eocene strata. It would certainly have been a fine place to live for any conchologist, as the Reverend Webster turned out to be. From at least 1901 to 1909 he was an active member of the Auckland Institute and Museum, and during this time made several donations of shells to the Auckland Museum, along with a coloured drawing of a *Tethys Tryoni* (sea hare - current name *Aplysia parvula*). He also delivered four papers to the members of the Institute - "New Species of Marine Shells" on 27 February 1905, "Additions to the New Zealand Fauna" and "Results of dredging on the Continental Shelf of New Zealand" (both 6 December 1905), and "Additions to the New Zealand Molluscan Fauna" (12 December 1907). The papers are reproduced, together with illustrations by the author, in The Transactions of the New Zealand Institute. Another paper "New Mollusca from New Zealand" appeared in the Proceedings of the Malacological Society.

The dredging referred to in Webster's 1905 lecture took place in January 1904, in 110 fathoms, off Great Barrier Island, reputedly "the first hauls over the 100-fathom line in Dominion waters". Henry Suter, one of Webster's companions, named a specimen found on the trip *Mitrella websteri. Also on this trip, one of the trio on relieving himself in the scuppers of the scow washed a small bivalve out of the mud. Believe it or not Henry Suter named it Ascitellina urinatoria (Suter,1913): personal comment from Baden Powell.* But this is not the only mollusc to commemorate William Webster. A fresh-water mussel found by him in an artificial drain in Waiuku in 1902 was named *Diplon menziesi websteri. The mussels were actually found by my grandfather, William George M. Webster*, and the species *Sassia websteri* was named in his honour in 1932. Webster himself named *Laoma (Phrixgnathus) francesci* after his son, Francis " to whose energy I owe a major part of my collection of non-marine Mollusca".

In 1929 he gifted his substantial collection of New Zealand and foreign shells to the new Auckland War Memorial Museum. This donation, together with the collection put together by his old friend, the late Charles Cooper, and in conjunction with the personal collection of mollusca of the Museum's first curator of conchology, Dr A W B Powell, created what was probably one of the foremost conchology collections in New Zealand at that time. This 1929 gift contained a number of type specimens and was one of the first obtained by the Museum.

William Henry Webster died in England on 6 May 1931 aged 81 years. A death notice was printed in the New Zealand Herald the next day, and obituaries appeared in the Herald, Church Gazette and Franklin Times in the following weeks.

The Auckland Institute and Museum's Annual Report 1929-30; (A W B Powell, editor), and the Centennial History of the Auckland Institute & Museum 1867-1967 (Auckland, 1967) both record them paying a tribute to the Reverend Webster as "an enthusiastic conchologist", and benefactor of the Auckland Museum. It was also noted that he was survived by four sons and

a daughter. And the daughter's name? Mrs J J Seymour - the 1943 donor of the logbooks to the Auckland Public Library. In fact, J J Seymour was James Joyce Seymour, her third husband whom she married in 1917. (*Kevin Burch, from family records)*

As a matter of interest, from my earliest recollection, on the hearth in my grandparent's home were three shells, a Cyprea tigris, Haliotis corrugata and a species of Phyllonotus duplex,(the last now named Hexaplex duplex) all of which are in my collection.

It is worth noting that from 1901 to 1904, he wrote many letters to lighthouse keepers at Cape Maria van Diemen, Mokohinau Is and Manukau North Head Lighthouse. He purchased shells from the keepers, and also gifted various specimens to museums around the world. I have the original letters of thanks from Otago University Museum dated 1903, Australian Museum, Sydney, British Museum of Natural History, both dated 1904 and the Smithsonion Institution, Washington, 1902, as it was called in those days. I have all the above letters and documents in my collection. In one letter, a discussion was entered into as to whether an Astraea Heliotrohpium [sic] was worth 2/6pence or 3/6pence.

No doubt this is why I have conchology in my genes!

The author, Kevin Burch, is Rev William Henry Webster's Great Grandson. Ed.

Adding value to your property: one snail species at a time

Fred Keil

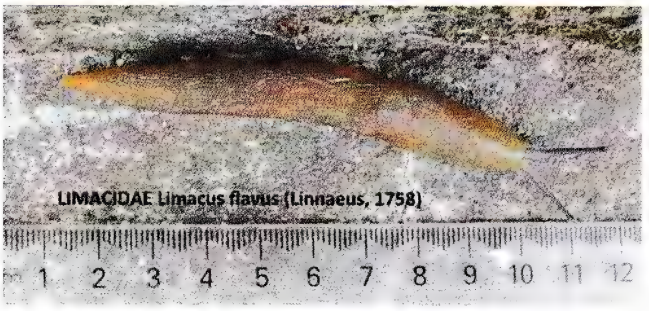
Being a little mobility challenged these days, but still keen to pursue my shell passion, I decided to get some leaf litter from the garden to see what might be lurking. The search produced a surprising number of species. If we ignore the common garden snails and maybe the *Oxychilus cellarius* (Muller, 1774), the species found at 85 Church St, Masterton were[1]:

Lauria cylindracea **(da Costa, 1778) Family: Lauriidae. Length: 3.2 mm**

Lamellidea novoseelandica **(Kuster, 1852). Family: Achatinellidae 3.2 x1.6 mm**

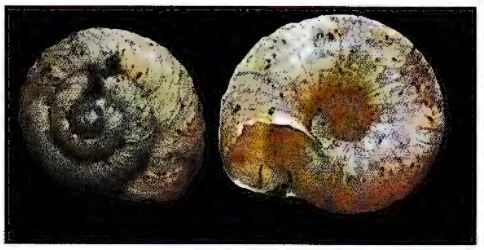
Vallonia excentrica **Sterke, 1893. Family: Valloniidae.**

Photo credit: D. J. Roscoe, 30 March 2005.Width: 2.5 mm



Limacus flavus **(Linne, 1758). Family: Limacidae**

The biggest surprise was the small native snail that appears to be *Paralaoma raricostata* (Suter, 1890). So far, a number of these have turned up under a trellis with a heavy growth of clematis vine. This species has turned up in other locations in the Wairarapa such as Mauriceville and Eketahuna, but to survive in a garden setting where the soil is constantly disturbed seems quite unusual. No live shells have so far been found, so maybe they have been tilled out of existence.



Paralaoma cf raricostata **(Suter, 1890).**

Family: Punctidae 1.7 x1.0 mm

So, if you happen to be holed up at home with a little time to spare, I suggest you get out in the garden or back yard with a sieve and a good magnifying glass. Good hunting.

[1] If you're looking to sell your house, having a home-grown molluscan fauna may be an advantage?

Tateidae on the Rameka Creek Track, Golden Bay

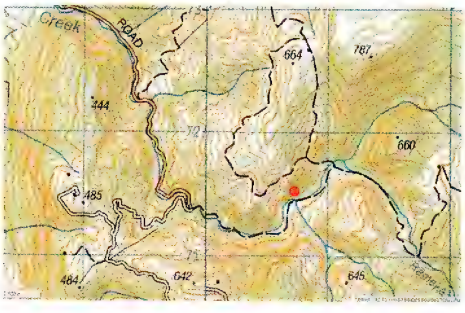
- something new or range extensions?

Arie Frans de Jong and Pete Cresswell

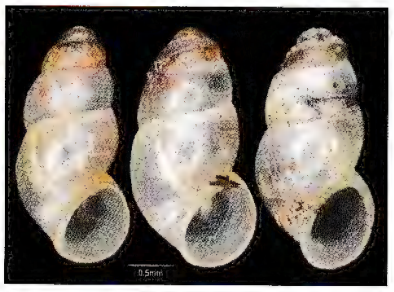
Co-author, Frans de Jong, while visiting New Zealand from The Netherlands, was walking some of the Rameka Creek Road in East Takaka, together with Golden Bay resident Saskia Wood, in January 2014.

Branching off that road is a secondary road accessing farm properties and a private hydro-power station. About 80m along this road, they found a small cascade. The rocks were heavily moss-covered and, clearly of interest for possible tateids. The moss/dead leaves and grit turned out to be a veritable treasure trove of tateids – likely all one species – which compare reasonably with *Opacuincola lisannea* Verhaegen & Haase, 2021 in terms of shell size and general appearance. The illustrated specimen is 2.5mm in length.

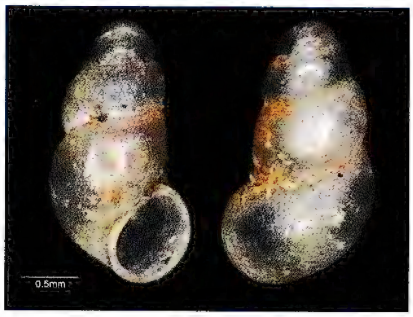
The roadside cascade over moss covered rocks.



Locality of roadside cascade on track above Rameka Creek



***Opacuincola cf lisannea:* from Rameka Creek track. Photo: A.S.**



***O. lisannea* from the type locality: Photo: A.S.**

Pete Cresswell has *O. lisannea* from the type locality, and specimens we both have from the track to the Blue Creek resurgence in Tapawera in our respective collections are considered to be *O cf lisannea*.(Cresswell & Spurgeon, 2023:12-14). Only anatomical and DNA results can confirm identity.

With this in mind we are relatively confident of it being eventually confirmed. So for the moment, we speculate the species occupies a much larger catchment than was previously recorded – i.e. the type locality at Kaituna Track. Potentially, *lisannea* extends from Kaituna (40:423630; 172.33363) to Blue Creek (41.472507; 172.566485) to Rameka Creek Road (40.911826; 172.855024) – an area divided by rivers, upland and valleys.

Saskia searched the steep ground about 7 metres further along the road and, surprisingly, discovered two smaller discharges from the almost vertical face at about 5m above the road level. The discharges appear to be from an underground source, not necessarily directly connected to the primary trickle.

Here, she collected a small sample of moss, from which two quite distinct species of tateids were recovered. Not unexpectedly, one was *O.cf lisannea*, although while they appear to be the same as those from the trickle at the road, they are consistently smaller in the compared random sample of x20 specimens. The second was a surprise, which we believe to be either *Catapyrgus jami* Verhaegen & Haase, 2021 or a species with affinities to that. For the present we call it *C cf jami.* That species was not found at the lower collecting site, which has no immediate indication of a subterranean origin, whereas the discharges above the road are clearly subterranean and may not be of the same derivation.

As far as we know *C jami* is recorded only from the type locality – in association with *O lisannea*. Also, as far as we know, it has not been found at Blue Creek – despite extensive collecting there. Until DNA work is undertaken, the specimens of *C cf* jami and *O cf* lisannea from Rameka Creek Track (both sources) will remain indeterminate. However, should they later be determined as indicated it will be another situation where 'species pairing' occurs. (Cresswell 2022).

This area of Golden Bay is particularly rich in diorite – as a strata base – overlaid with granite and, at the site of the discharges above the road, also overlaid with marble. Generally, snails in this area are associated with the marble. Fissures in the limestones - here marble - might allow tateids to disperse. (Saskia Wood – *pers comms 17 May 2024*).

***Catapyrgus jami* from the type locality at Kaituna Track, sw of Collingwood, Nelson. Photo: A.S.**

***Catapyrgus cf jami* Verhaegen & Haase, 2021from the discharge 5m above the road. Photo: A.S.**

Saskia Wood at the discharge 5m above the road at 40:911826; 172: 855024.

References:

Cresswell, Pete, 2022. Tateidae: is "species pairing" significant? *Cookia* Vol 34 pp 16-17.

Cresswell, Pete & Sturgeon, Andrew, 2023: Nelson Builds as New Zealand's Premier Tateidae Hotspot. *Cookia* 2023 pp 12-14.

Verhaegen, G. and Haase, M., 2021. All-inclusive descriptions of new freshwater snail taxa of the hyperdiverse family Tateidae (Gastropoda, Caenogastropoda) from the South Island of New Zealand. *European Journal of Taxonomy*, *731*, pp.71-96.

Acknowledgements:

The authors are grateful to Saskia Wood for her insightful appreciation of the geology of the locality and for her inclusion in the field work. We are also very much obliged to Andrew Spurgeon (A.S) for his photographic skills – as indicated.

Club 'Open Day', Johnsonville

Jill Burnet

Our 'Open Day' at Johnsonville Collective Community Hub, was held on 22 June 2024, almost the shortest day of the year, but inside we were cheered by displays of colourful and bright shells. A great crew of members got up early, probably in the dark, to help set up, and an amazing number of lovely shell displays were carried in to line one wall. Kris Woods brought the club sales table, there were baskets of giveaway shells and free books.

The shell displays which really enhanced the event

Members and visitors interacting

Once again Collective First National put up great advertising signs in the local area, and our newspaper advertisement brought others from further afield – I spoke to one woman who saw it and decided that would be her day's outing despite a journey of two bus rides each way. Not surprisingly for the middle of winter, we had rather a slow start, but the trickle of visitors became a steady stream, and when I looked around late morning, all club members were busy talking to visitors. Even better, some of those visitors became members.

It was especially good to see David Cowe, who dragged his daughters all the way over the hill from Greytown – they had a hard time dragging him away again in the afternoon. And I enjoyed catching up with Karin Mahlfeld who came in with Wilma Blom. In the afternoon, Margaret Elliot arrived with some of her artwork, which attracted David Cowe, then Lyn Clark was encouraged to get her sketch book out of her back pack.

Margaret Elliot with David Cowe

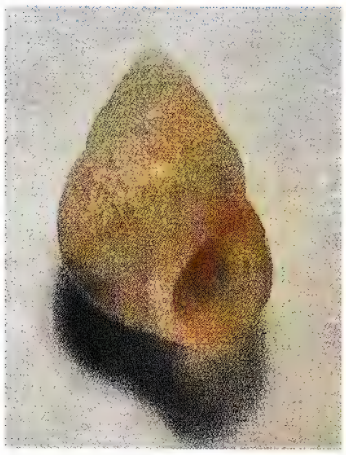
By closing time, the club sales table had done a steady business, and the baskets of giveaway shells were very depleted – they had been a great drawcard.

Everyone helped willingly with the take-down and clean up, and then half a dozen members went off for a meal at a local restaurant, a convivial ending to a great day.

Angustassiminea vulgaris (Webster, 1905)

- found in the South Island of New Zealand!

Bert van Tiggele



Angustassiminea vulgaris **(Webster, 1905)**

Northern localities: ★

Nelson locality: ★

The small supra-littoral gastropod, *Angustassiminea vulgaris* (Webster, 1905) is found in the northern part of the North Island of New Zealand. It lives in the splash zone of beaches under and amongst decaying material.

To the best of my knowledge, it is not recorded in the south of the North Island and certainly not in the South Island. However, in 2015 I found a single empty shell in a sand sample gathered intertidally from Tahunanui, Nelson. This was an exciting find. But there being only the one it was not clear how the shell came to be there. An expansion in distribution for the species to include Tahunanui Beach? But subsequent searches in that locality have failed to yield any more. Also, searches in other likely habitats in the area have been fruitless. Clearly there is not a breeding population at Tahunanui. But could it be another fragment of evidence indicating global warming where environmental conditions have changed sufficiently to allow the migration of another species to become established in the South Island? Has there been a change in sea level, mean high water and/or air temperature, salinity or perhaps other variables associated with any or all of these criteria?

The answers are certainly not presented here, but the question is posed for the future.

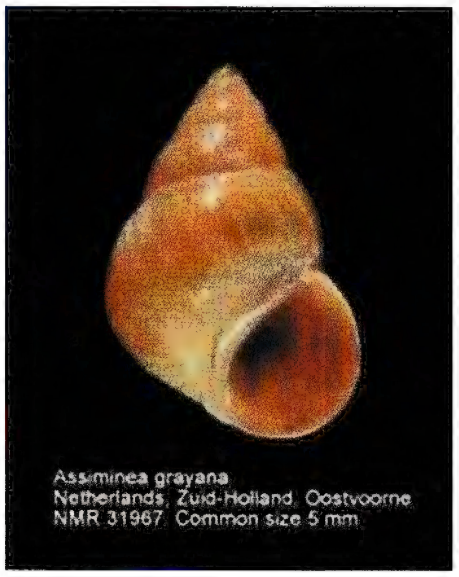
The small size of the species (H<4 mm) and habitat of the extreme high-water zone, suggest that it could be readily transported on floating seaweed, by migratory birds or by human activities. All these processes are not new.

About the shell itself: A.W.B Powell described it in his book as,

> *"very small, with narrowly pointed spire, solid, smooth and glossy. .... Operculum D-shaped, thin, white, paucispiral the nucleus subcentral. Coluor of shell dark honey-brown in living examples, but fades to pale warm-buff.*
> *Height 2.0-3.5 mm width: 1.25 to 2.1 mm."* (Powell 1979:125)

The New Zealand shells of this species look very similar to the European shell of *Assiminea grayana* (Fleming, 1828) from the Atlantic Ocean, North Sea, the description of which is:

> *".. up to 5mm high ... shell is a short squat cone of 6-7 whorls with spire about 50% of shell height. Apex is a fine point. Whorls nearly flat-sided with shallow sutures No umbilicus but large specimens may have a columellar depression."* (Smith, I.F.)



Assiminea grayana **Fleming, 1828**
(reproduced with permission)

Literature examined:

Powell, A.W.B. 1979 New Zealand Mollusca. Marine, Land and Freshwater. ISBN 0 00 216906 1. Collins, Auckland.

Raven, Jenny & Bracegirdle Selwyn. June 2020. New Zealand Seashells. ISBN 978-473-51871-4.

Smith, Ian Frank *Assiminea grayana* Fleming, 1828 Identification and Biology.PDF version of Flickr species account at https://flic.kr/s/aHsjF2Mhs6.

Taylor, Simon *Assiminea grayana* Fleming, 1828. Now apparently well-established on the NW Coast of England. The Conchological Society of Great Britain and Ireland July 2007.

Webster, W.H. 1905. Some new species of New Zealand marine shells, together with remarks on some non-marine species, and some addition to the "Index Fauna", Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute, 37 (p.277)

Notes on New Zealand Collected Species
and pictures to be proud of

Monstrotyphis pauperis

(Mestayer, 1916)

10mm. Found in weather balloon debris, Trawled in 100m, west of Cuvier Island. May 2024.

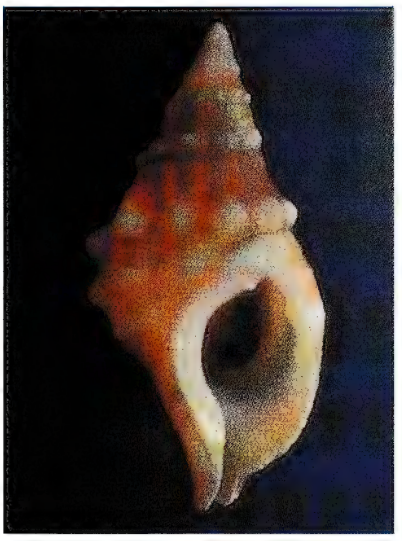
Claire Elliot

Proxicharonia palmeri

Powell, 1967.

43.3mm. Dredged live 85m Mercury Bay. April 2024.

Claire Elliot

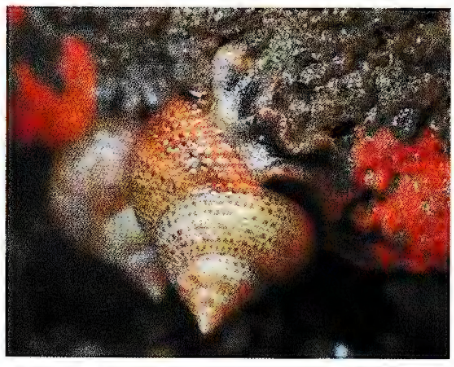


Conus lischkeanus

Weinkauff, 1875.

43mm. Dredged live, Whangaroa Harbour, April 2024

Claire Elliot



Maurea punctulata

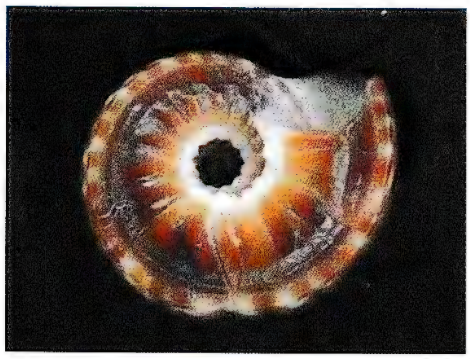
(Martyn, 1784)

Cornwallis Beach, Auckland – living on low tidal rocks and grazing sponges.

Javier Couper

This Architectonicidae is probably a *Philippia lutea* (Lamarck, 1822) but its small size (7mm) and dark colouring make it look a little different. It was washed up at Taupiri Bay, Northland in January 2024.

Jenny Raven



This pretty little oyster is only 28mm and obviously a foreign visitor. It was attached to a fishing net washed in at Pahi Bay, north of Taupiri Bay, Northland in January 2023.

Jenny Raven

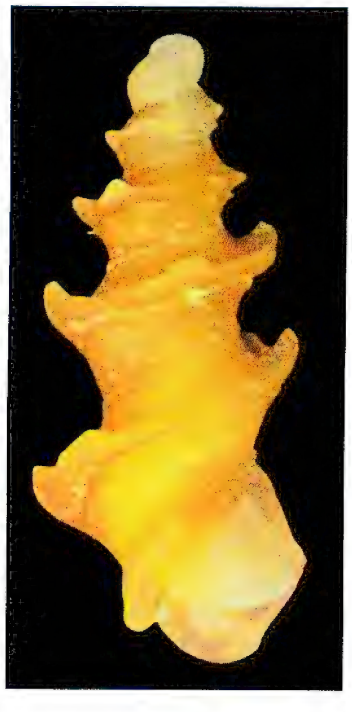
Shells don't have to be big to be beautiful

Merelina coronata

(Powell, 1926)

2.2 mm long. Collected by Mary Agnes Wotton at Matai Beach, January 1989. Came to me when her collection was distributed.

Fred Keil



Shell Club Field Trip to Mahia Peninsula

31 August - 4 September 2023

Lyn Clark

I had been a shell club member in my early teens back in the 1980's, when I had gone on a field trip to Whanganui; I rejoined last year and found myself with Jenny Raven on the road to a place I'd never visited. I was excited to be going somewhere new, and to be re-connecting with my childhood passion for shells.

It was sobering, and slow-going at times, driving through the remains of cyclone Gabrielle's destruction between Napier and Wairoa, but as dusk fell on Thursday, we stopped at Ōpoutama Road lookout to watch the full moon rise in clear sky above the peninsula. It was a harbinger for beautiful weather the entire time of our stay.

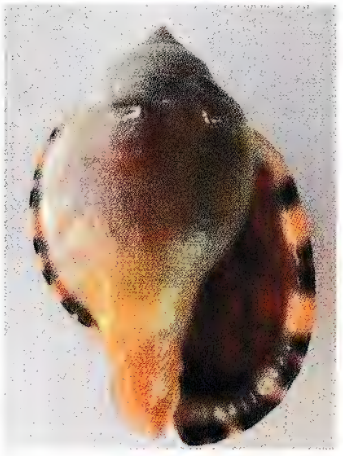
Moon rising at Opoutama Beach, Mahia Peninsula

The attendees were me, Jenny Raven, and Ellen Ellis from Wellington. Derrick Crosby came from Whakatāne, and his son Donald from Esk Valley, and Jim and Leigh Crossland came up from Christchurch in their camper. We stayed at Mahia Motel and Holiday Park, handy to the beach.

On Friday morning we drove to the west end of Ōpoutama beach, and I picked up useful tips on beach-combing from Jenny to get myself back into the 'groove.' Good finds included the mactra *Resania lanceolata*, and a jingle shell, *Monia zelandica* and other bivalves. I also found *Maurea punctulata*, and *Tugali elegans*.

Friday afternoon we went to Auroa Point on the north-east side of the peninsula, where I found what I was told was a nice specimen of the mitre shell *Isara carbonaria*, a species I'd never come across before; and a cowrie, *Ellatrivia merces*, something I'd been fascinated by, and wanted to find back in my childhood collecting days, and here it was!

Jim found a live *Semicassis labiata* in a tidal pool, and Derrick a lovely, large and dark *Semicassis labiata* on the beach just north of the point. Also found were *Maurea waikanae*, a species not previously recorded on club lists for Mahia, as well as *Maurea tigris*, *M punctulata*, and *M osbornei*.



***Semicassis labiata* (Perry, 1811)**

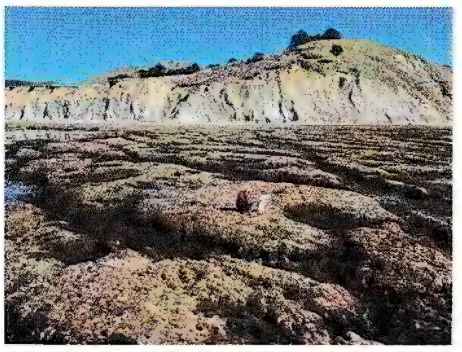
That evening we had a very enjoyable meal at the Sunset Point Tavern, and Donald shared some photographs of the cyclone damage to his horticulture operation; we were thankful that he had come out of it "relatively lightly" in his words.

On Saturday morning we drove to the northern end of Mahanga beach to look through a large shell bank next to the stream mouth. Good finds here were *Alcithoe fusus*, *Semicassis pyrum*, and large specimens of *Amalda australis*. I found some worn remains of *Poirieria zelandica* too.

Saturday afternoon we searched along Ōraka beach; the rock platform exposed at low-tide was coated in silt from the cyclone and a large cliff-face slip, making it very slippery in places, and life in the reef's rock pools had suffered too. On the sandy beach nearer the car park, I found a wentletrap, *Cirsotrema zelebori,* and *Maurea tigris*. There were good numbers of *Penion sulcatus* in places among the rocks; other finds included *Cookia sulcata*, and live *Cellana flava*, and *C radians* on a rock reef. Jenny found a *Cabestana spengleri* and kindly donated it to me as I didn't have one in my collection.

On the return trip we stopped at Auroa Point again, where more *Isara carbonaria*, and *Ellatrivia merces* were found, and *Philippia lutea*. I looked at the myriad small, fine shells that constitute the eastern side of the beach here and thought I'd get eyestrain trying to find anything but being methodical helped. The smallest shells I found, I think are *Rissoina sp*. Some fishermen on the beach had caught a large, pink lamprey which they had left to contemplate its impending fate in a rock pool, so I took the opportunity to have a closer look at it, having only ever seen them pickled in formaldehyde at university decades ago!

On Sunday Jenny and Ellen went to Gisborne to visit some members of the club, and I decided to do another sweep of Opoutama beach in the morning which didn't net much in the way of shells except a small *Penion sulcatus*, but I did sight a couple of banded dotterels.



Oraka Reefs at low tide

That afternoon I walked back to Ōraka beach, a little further than I'd bargained for, but gave me an impressive step-count for the day. This time I found what I thought was a very nice specimen of *Penion sulcatus*, and some more bird sightings, a group of at least 20 NZ dotterels making good use of low tide for feeding. Other shell

The spoils of the trip – our collective total

species found on this trip included *Pholadidea sp.*, *Haliotis virginea crispata*, *Maoricrypta youngi*, *Coelotrochus viridis*, *Buccinulum pallidum*, and *B fuscozonatum*.

On Monday Jenny and I headed back to Wellington, with a visit to a former shell club member Bill Shortt in Napier where we were shown the biggest collection of paper nautilus I'd ever seen!

Editor's note: Where to read more about Mahia.

Cookia Vol 14, Special Issue, The Wellington Shell Club Lists contains a section on Mahia, pp 43-49. This includes comments on the most popular shell collecting areas, and lists of the shells found up to that time, sorted under six different locations and noting whether found dead or alive.

The Club trip to East Cape and Mahia 2011 was written up by Kerry Walton in *Cookia* Vol 23. The second part of his account covers the Mahia part of the trip and records the best finds from the beaches visited.

Ian Townsend and Leita Chrystall also visited Mahia in 2011 and in *Cookia* Vol 24, Ian describes sorting shell sand from there. He mentioned that the quality of the shells found in 2011 was poor compared to those found in 1998. Ian's account of the 1998 trip is in *Cookia* Vol 9 and contains a list of small shells found in shell sand at Auroa Point.

If you want to compare your present day finds with those of 40 or 50 years ago, our earliest records from Mahia seem to be two paragraphs by Mrs Boswell in Bulletin 19 where she records highlights of a trip in 1968. Her finds are combined with those of a later trip in 1973 and listed in *Cookia* Vol 4 No 3.

Mary Agnes Wotton made a trip to Mahia in January 1981 and listed her finds in *Cookia* Vol4 No 2.

A club trip that some of us still remember fondly was held on Easter weekend 1983, and Eric Scott wrote this up for *Cookia* Vol 5 No. 3, with detailed lists of what was found at each place visited.

Pat Lakeman and Graham Aamodt visited Mahia in March 1985 and Pat's account of this is in *Cookia* Vol. 6 No 1, with a note of the best finds from each beach.

In *Cookia* Vol 6 No 3, Jenny Raven tells of her finds from recent trips

In 1992, there was another club trip to Mahia which was written up in *Cookia* Vol 6 No 4 by Helen MacFarlane. Unfortunately it was marred by bad weather, but Helen noted the best finds, and Don Watson recorded his experiences diving there with his son, Donald.

New Zealand Record

Pete Cresswell

In the course of working with Vivienne Robertson's collection, members Pat Lakeman and Jill Burnet spotted an exceptionally large specimen of *Maoricolpus roseus* (Quoy & Gaimard, 1834). Having regard to Selwyn's advice[1] the monster was well worth measuring. It turned out to be 101.5mm in length – a new record for the Auckland Register, which was later verified by Peter Poortman[2].

The provenance is that it was found by Vivienne washed up on Petone Beach on 6 March 2012. She also added ……. "at the western end after a big southerly blow had gone through, and the beach was littered with seaweed and mussels."

Vivienne is an early cab off the rank. A challenge to others!

[1] See Selwyn's article ***Primum venire* Essentially for those who like to come first!**
[2] Specimen photographed by Pat Lakeman.

A Dutch Malacologist in New Zealand

Arie Frans de Jong

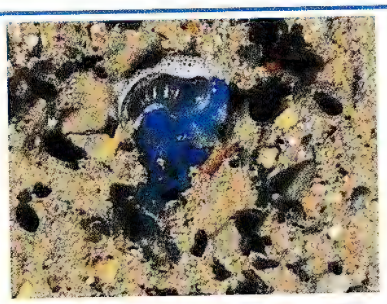
Saskia Wood from Pohara and I have known each other for many years. In the beginning of 2023 she sent me pictures of some snails from her garden. Some I knew very well because they are introduced species from Europe; species like *Cornu aspersum* (O.F. Müller, 1774), *Oxychilus draparnaudi* (Beck, 1837), *Cochlicopa lubrica* (O.F. Müller, 1774) and *Vallonia excentrica* Sterki, 1893, but some others were clearly endemic species. Difficult to say something about the identity of a *charopid* snail from a photo, so I promised to have a closer look during my planned trip to New Zealand later that year. And so I arrived 31st of October in Nelson where I was greeted by Saskia and we were kindly invited for lunch by Pete Cresswell of Motueka the next day. To my surprise I met Bert van Tiggele there too (I know Bert from an excursion of the Dutch Malacological Society to Brittany in the seventies). We decided to do some shelling together, especially to look for Tateidae in caves and seepages in the limestone area of Tasman, with Pohara as a base.

A few weeks later I flew to Wellington to visit another old shell-mate, Fred Keil of Masterton. The hospitality of Fred and Lesley made my stay in Masteron very enjoyable and he invited me to attend the meeting of the Wellington Shell Club on 25th of November 2023, which was so much fun that I instantly decided to become a member.

By-the-wind sailors and other flotsam

During my stay Saskia and I visited some beautiful beaches, like Anapai, Whahariki and Whanganui Inlet. On the last two mentioned we found one of my favorite sea shell species: *Janthina exigua* Lamarck, 1816. *Janthina* is an ocean going genus, drifting around on a bubble raft that they produce and they prey on bluebottle jellyfish *Physalia utriculus* (Gmelin, 1788)[1] and by-the-wind sailors *Velella velella* (Linnaeus, 1758).

V. velella is a lesser known species but it seems that strandings have become more common in recent times. John



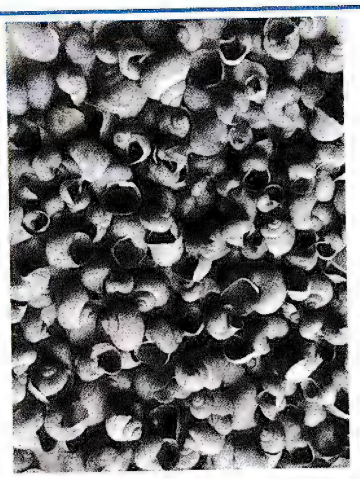
***Physalia utriculus* (Gmelin 1778) from Whanganui Inlet, Nelson**

***Velella velella* (Linnaeus, 1758) Animal perished, the remaining float is shown, Whanganui Inlet**

E.C. Flux records the first mass stranding from the North Island of New Zealand on 5th November 2006 and states that before then only a few drifted ashore every year. Now, 468 occurrences are registered on GBIF)[2]. A sign of climate change? On Whahariki Beach we found hundreds of *J. exigua* .Brillant! Another pelagic species of mollusc is the ram's horn shell, *Spirula spirula* (Linnaeus, 1758). No ordinary shell, but the internal shell of a squid, that lives pelagically mostly between 100-300m but reaches depths up to 1,000 meters. The chambered shell functions as a buoyancy organ; it is divided by septa, which are connected by a siphon channel. The chambered structure gives the shell, after the death of the animal, great buoyancy so that it can float large distances, before washing up. We found them on Whahariki and the beaches of Whanganui Inlet.

Ballroom and other caves and seepages[3]

As mentioned earlier, Pete and Bert invited us to accompany them to some localities where Tateidae could be expected. We visited Ballroom Cave near the Aorere Goldfield Track, and another, Twin Forks Cave near Mangarākau. In both, we took samples of silt from the small streams that flow from them. After sieving, we found a



***Janthina exigua* (Lamarck, 1822), from Whahariki Beach, West Nelson**

***Spirula spirula* (Linnaeus, 1758) washed up at Whanganui Inlet**

bounty of Tateidae[4]: species like *Opacuincola kuscheli* Climo, 1974, (TF) *O. turriformis* Haase, 2008 (TF), *O. eduardstraussi* Haase, 2008 (TF), *O. johannstraussi* Haase, 2008 (B), *O. josefstraussi* Haase 2008 (B) and *Catapyrgus cf sororius* Haase, 2008 (TF+B).

How fitting to find such species in the Ballroom Cave!

A visit to the Riwaka Resurgence brought us the endemic *Platypyrgus nelsonensis* (Climo 1977). We also visited the seepages near the Blue Creek Resurgence, and, although very dry, there was still some water, and lots of cryptic tateid[5] shells.

Saskia and I found a small seep system along the Rameka Creek Track (Motupipi),which yielded many tateids. This find was later followed up with a second visit by Saskia, Pete and Dee Cresswell and Bert and Jenny van Tiggele.The results are presented separately in this *Cookia*.

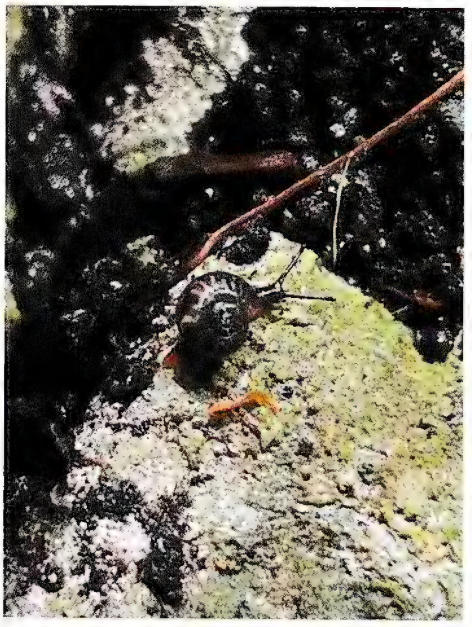
A bounty of Tateidae from Twin Forks Cave

Saskia's garden

Saskia has been living for over 20 years in Pohara and has a property around her house of about half an acre: 50% is in lawn and vegetables, with the remainder in regenerating coastal native bush. For that period, Saskia has engaged in a vigorous alien pest control programme; targeting rats, mice, stoats and possums; letting the the native trees grow as naturally as possible. All over the garden are limestone rocks, that hold warmth and create micro environments for native invertebrates. Large introduced snails like the brown garden snail, *Cornu aspersum* (O.F. Müller, 1774) become scarcer due to predation by song thrushes, *Turdus philomelos* Brehm, 1831.

Among the native trees and in rock crevices, native snails can now be found. For example, *Phryxgnatus celia* Hutton, 1883 on Kawakawa, *Piper excelsum* G. Forst, 1786, and on the trunks of Mahoe *Melicytus ramiflorus* J.R. Forst & G. Forst, 1776, *Flammulina perdita* (Hutton, 1883). In a moist rock crevice we found *Flammulina crebriflammea* (Reeve, 1852) and *Cavellia buccinella* (Reeve, 1852)[6].

During my stay Saskia and I visited some people who are actively regenerating original coastal bush and in all cases we could find native snails, so it seems that original bush and controlling alien pests really help to restore the native snail fauna. On the other hand, we visited a cave system that stretches under farmland and on sampling the silt found only *Potamopyrgus antipodarum* (Gray, 1843), which is a less hopeful signal. Anyway, for me one thing is certain: New Zealand has much to offer the malacologist,with many questions unsolved. For me, reason enough to return soon!



***Flammulina crebriflammea* (Reeve, 1852) in Saskia's garden**

[1] *Physalia physalis* (Linnaeus, 1758) is the accepted name by the World Register of Marine Species for the bluebottle. Personally, I can hardly imagine that the bluebottle and the Portuguese man-of-war *Physalia physalis* are the same species. I saw a mass stranding of Portuguese man-of-war on the Azores Islands, and they are very different and far more hazardous. So, I prefer to use here the synonymized name *Physalia utriculus*.

[2] https://www.gbif.org/ GBIF - Global Biodiversity Information Facility.

[3] **Editor's note:** Early European settlers and miners in this area were reputed to hold "balls" in this cave, but this was likely more an allusion to the size rather than an actual venue. The species names, *eduardstraussi, johannstrassi and josefstraussi, were* all assigned by Martin Haase and inspired by the name of the location.

[4] Cave abbreviations are Ballroom (B) and Twin Forks (T.F.)

[5] Cresswell & Spurgeon 2023:12

[6] There is some confusion around the nomenclature of this species. It is named *Flammulina crebiflammea* (Reeve, 1852) and as junior synonym *Flammulina crebriflammea* (Reeve, 1852) referring to the publication in Monographia heliceorum viventum. However, Pfeiffer described it in January 1852, in the Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London, and Reeve mentions it in his iconography in October 1852, referring to Pfeiffer's description in the Proceedings. While I have used Reeve's name here, in my opinion, Pfeiffer's description prevails, and I think even more of Reeve's species will prove to be first described by Pfeiffer.

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WoRMS – World Register of Marine Species. https://www.marinespecies.org/

Hadopyrgus rawhiti Haase, 2008

Tracking down a very elusive tateid

Pete Cresswell

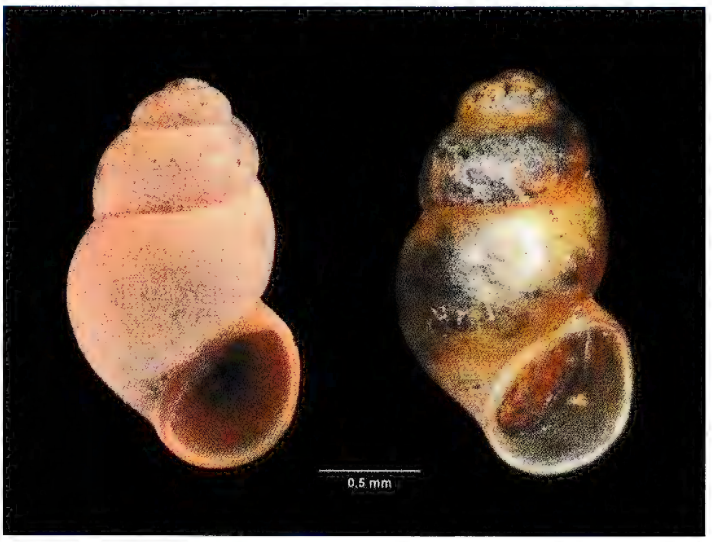
By now, some readers will possibly have a realization that my finding scattered members of the freshwater family Tateidae has become more than a passing interest. There are 51 species & sub-species identified from the South Island (excluding Stewart Island). I had tracked down all but 5, so being able to close that gap has become a 'mission'[1].

One species in particular has, for some years, been on my radar: ***Hadopyrgus rawhiti*** Haase, 2008. In his revision of the same year, Martin Haase lists 6 species of *Hadopyrgus*, two of which were described by Frank Climo in 1974 and the balance by Haase in 2008.

The genus was originally erected by Climo (1974) for *anops and brevis* which he described from interstitial gravels in the Waimea Plain, Nelson. Haase described *ngataana* from a stream in the Maitai Cave, Nelson; *expositus* which he recorded from the Maitai Valley, Nelson; *dubius* from groundwater at the source of the Riwaka River, Nelson[2]; and *rawhiti* , the type locality of which he gave as: "Seepage by waterfall beside stream behind Double Bay …" Furthermore, Haase recorded that it was only known from the type locality (Haase 2008:133). Winston Ponder, found this population in 1982 and, as far as I know, it has never been subsequently collected – anywhere.

Over the past decade, along with other Club members, at least four times I visited the general area between Raetihi and Hopewell in Double Bay, Kenepuru Sound, Marlborough, with the sole target being *H. rawhiti.* Not until the 1st of March this year and accompanied by Bert van Tiggele, Kevin Mead and my wife, Dee, were we ever near being successful.

Marks the location of the waterfall above Raetihi near which we found the elusive *Hadopyrgus rawhiti*

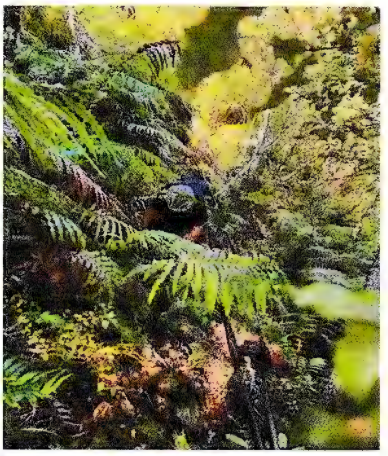


Holotype. Height 1.9 mm. © Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (CC-BY-NC-ND)

***Hadopyrgus rawhiti*: a specimen we found. Height: 2.0 mm. Photo courtesy of Andrew Spurgeon**

It transpired that the waterfall Winston referred to was quite far up one of the larger streams behind Raetihi Lodge[3], and accessible only by following an old (but functioning) water pipe feeding tanks for the lodge. Doubtless, in 1982, the track alongside the pipeline was newly opened, of sound construction and while steep, readily negotiated over its length of about 1km. Not the case now, it being overgrown, partially collapsed and in places, steep, slippery and downright risky. In some places there are ropes to hang on to between trees. Had it not been for drought conditions, I don't think we'd have succeeded.

Scratched and drained at the end of about 90 minutes, we reached the fall. From a trickle emerging from a crevice adjacent to the main stream, we collected about a litre of dead leaves, rotted twigs, some moss, and sand.



Searching a deceptively "benign" looking area adjacent to the fall.

[1] There are others I have from the South Island, as yet undescribed.

[2] I have collected this from seepages adjacent to Schilanders Creek Track, Nelson

[3] Waterfall locality at 41.183111; 173.932414

The stream immediately above the fall, during very low water conditions

Similar amounts were collected from other nearby likely spots, including moss from exposed rocks in the main stream above the fall.

The return journey, while downhill, was almost as demanding, but we made it to the roadhead, where Alan Campbell, the owner of Raetihi Lodge, kindly met us in his truck and provided a most welcome lift to the Lodge. Alan's wife, Liane, added to the kindness with cold refreshments. We regaled them both with accounts of our efforts and results. Likely, their belief in us being borderline nutters was firmly reinforced!

Were we successful? Yes, but it took some days of vainly searching the wet material followed by carefully drying and sieving the dried remains before we finally found a small number. With an adult height of 2mm, they were not easy. Samples of the material finally extracted are in the collections of those involved.

H. rawhiti remains a geographic outlier of the genus. Given the isolation and difficult terrain of much of the Marlborough Sounds, additional localities are only likely to be found by deliberately focused and sustained efforts. In my opinion, there just have to be other populations of the same or allied species. Haase remarked that it occupied a "somewhat exceptional position within *Hadopyrgus.*" More genetic data was called for. Anyone for some hillside rambles?

References:

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Haase, Martin (2008) The radiation of hydrobiid gastropods in New Zealand: A revision including the description of new species based on morphology and mtDNA sequence information, Systematics and Biodiversity, 6:1, 99-159, DOI: 10.1017/S1477200007002630

Do You Need Some Inspiration?

Jenny Raven

I was sorting through the club's library books when I came across a 1930 volume of the New Zealand Institute, precursor of the Royal Society of New Zealand. For some reason it fell open on the Presidential address by Mr. B C Aston. The last paragraph caught my attention; it read:

"This is a fitting time to urge the claims of science on all. When one reflects on how little the average man or woman does to advance exact knowledge and how much could be done, were each devoting part of the precious hours idled away, for some real, earnest search into truth, it is plain how much easier it would be for those few on whom the whole task of investigation is borne with little sympathy, understanding or assistance from the great mass of the people. I would that everyone were early taught to observe accurately, to record faithfully, and to communicate results regularly to the branches of this Institute. Such a habit of thought and work will, when acquired, only depart with life, for I can promise the student greater joys than he dreams of in any search into nature's secrets, when begun with humility and continued with enthusiasm. The man of science is a voyager on unknown seas. He has often headwinds, baffling currents and uncharted rocks to delay and threaten him, but if he is unwearied, if he is honest, his discoveries will be as real and as thrilling to him as anything that Drake or Raleigh ever knew."

Now is that not enough to inspire you to stop idling away your hours and get out on a beach or start sorting your shell collection.

A Recent Relevant Publication

A publication just to hand which is likely to be of considerable interest to most Club members is:

***Haliotis virginea* Gmelin, 1791 and a new abalone from Aotearoa New Zealand (Mollusca: Gastropoda: Haliotidae)**, by Kerry Walton, Bruce A. Marshall, Nicholas J. Rawlence and Hamish G. Spencer.

Abstract: Several subspecies and forms of *Haliotis virginea* Gmelin, 1791 have been recognised, with intergrading variants between many of them. Published genetic data recovered none of the named subspecies as both monophyletic and significantly divergent from one another. Conversely, specimens previously referred to *H. virginea* from Manawatāwhi Three Kings Islands formed a strongly supported, highly divergent, monophyletic clade, herein described as *Haliotis pirimoana* n. sp. This species differs subtly but consistently in having finer and more numerous spiral threads than *H. virginea* at an equivalent stage of growth. *Haliotis crispata* A. Gould, 1847, *H. gibba* R.A. Philippi, 1846, *H. huttoni* Filhol, 1880, H. *virginea morioria* A.W.B. Powell, 1938, and *H. virginea stewartae* M. Jones & B. Owen, 2004 are interpreted as synonyms of *H. virginea.* Neotypes are designated for *H. crispata* and *H. huttoni.* ZooBank article LSID: urn:lsid: zoobank.org:pub:C0F24F1D-E531-40A7-AAB6-932086847DD. Published on-line 30 August 2024. https://doi.org/10.1080/13235818.2024.2390476. Ed.

Notes From Abroad

Pat Lakeman

Although I no longer actively collect shells, my many years of scouring beaches for good finds means I am incapable of visiting a bit of coast without rummaging around to look at the sea life. So it was, on a holiday in England in May 2024. Many towns and villages and beaches on England's coast are unattractively commercialized and, especially on weekends and holidays, pretty much wall-to-wall people. We don't find that appealing but there are still relatively unspoilt spots, if you seek them out.

Part of our holiday was spent in Cornwall and Devon. Two beautiful (and almost empty) beaches there that stand out for me were Downderry Beach near Looe on Cornwall's south coast and Porthilly Beach on the Camel Estuary near Rock, on the north coast. My search for local shells was casual at best but it was still a joy to hunt about in such lovely natural surroundings. And a great antidote to wall-to -wall people.

Rock, on the north coast, is a short ferry ride across the estuary of the River Camel from its more well known (thanks to chef Rick Stein) neighbour, Padstow. Rock was a good point from which to visit Tintagel Castle and Port Isaac – the latter being home for the shanty-singing Fisherman's Friends and the location for the fictional village of Port Wenn, where Doc Martin practised in the television series of the same name.

Less well known, but more interesting to me, was a small village along that route called Trebetherick, a mere 3 kilometres from Rock, because of its association with Sir John Betjeman and "cowries". John Betjeman, 1906-1984, was an English poet, writer, and broadcaster. Knighted in 1969, he was Poet Laureate from 1972 until his death, and was famous not least for his accessible, popular poetry that nevertheless was criticised by some for being lightweight verse that lacked serious merit. (Think Pam Ayres.)

Betjeman enjoyed family holidays in Trebetherick as a child and he returned there often as an adult. He loved the area and wrote in detail about it, and Cornwall in general. And in that regard there is a shell connection – through his mention of "cowries" in his work. His poem "Greenaway" describes the stretch of coast at Trebetherick between Daymer Bay and Polzeath, where he often walked. In it he says

… "I hear the slowly dragging roar
As mighty rollers mount to cast
Small coal and seaweed on the shore,
And spurting far as it can reach
The shooting surf comes hissing round
To heave a line along the beach
Of cowries waiting to be found."

And in "Cornwall in Childhood":

.. "Three days on end would the September gale
Slam at our bungalows; three days on end
Rattling cheap doors and making tempers short.
It mattered not, for then enormous waves
House-high rolled thunderous on Greenaway,
Flinging up spume and shingle to the cliffs.
Unmoved amid the foam, the cormorant
Watched from its peak. In all the roar and swirl
The still and small things gained significance.
Somehow the freckled cowrie would survive .."

As the owner of a book of Betjeman's poems since my school days, and having an interest in Mollusca, I had wondered about "the freckled cowrie" – eventually finding out that it would have been *Trivia monacha* (da Costa, 1778), in the Family Triviidae.

***Trivia monacha* (da Costa, 1778) Aberffraw, Anglesey, UK 2007. Scale bar in cm. Photo credit Robinh at en.wikipedia**

***Ellatrivia merces* (Iredale, 1924) Taupiri Bay, New Zealand. Sept 2008. P.L.**

It has more than a passing resemblance to *Ellatrivia merces* (Iredale, 1924), also in the Family Triviidae, which I have always enjoyed finding in New Zealand. Alas, in my pottering around on Cornish beaches I didn't spot any "cowries" that I could have introduced to their kiwi cousins.

At this point I must mention that *T. monacha* is one of two members of the family Triviidae to be found in Britain. The other is *Trivia arctica* (Pulteney, 1799), very similar but lacking freckles and apparently readily distinguishable at the larval stage. I must mention it because a common name for *T. arctica* specimens in Scotland is "Groatie Buckies" and for me that is reason enough.

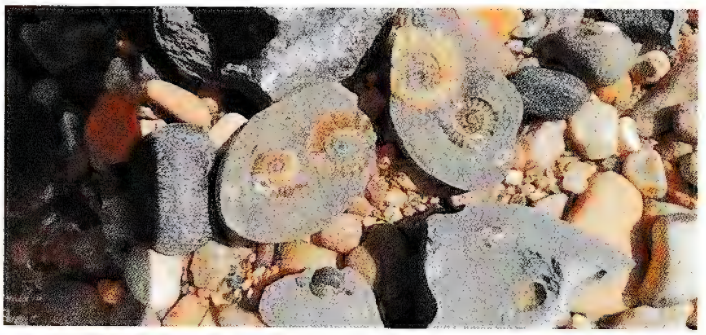
When you can't find shells on the beaches you can often buy them in shell shops or souvenir shops. The offerings I saw around Cornwall were almost entirely disappointing. Single valves of large scallops at Tintagel, selling at 50p (about NZ$1) each were probably local, but the net bags of mixed shells were full of common, poor-quality specimens of Indo-Pacific origin. The St Ives Shell Shop (established 1968 – "seashells, gifts, fashion jewellery, marine curios & home décor") boasted a wide range but from what I could see it was entirely of foreign origin, much of it only average quality, and all at tourist prices, of course.

Offerings at a shell shop, St Ives, Cornwall, UK

Better deals were to be had in shops in Devon, if you are made happy by older shells. As in fossils. The coast of East Devon and Dorset is known as "The Jurassic Coast", where outstanding geological features delineate earth history spanning over 185 million years along 95 miles of coastline. The Jurassic Coast was formed during the Permian, Triassic, Jurassic and Early Cretaceous periods (approximately 260 to 100 million years ago), when rocks were laid down in a gently subsiding basin. The rock layers were then tilted to the east, then exposed to erosion which was greatest in the west. More Cretaceous rocks were then deposited on the eroded surface, and more erosion created the present landscape.

The fossil bearing rocks on this coast were made famous by pioneer collectors and amateur palaeontologist, Mary Anning. Today fossil collectors continue to recover fossil remains before they are destroyed by the sea, and the Jurassic Coast Trust actively encourages responsible collecting. Fossils that fall from the cliffs can be found loose among the shingle, just by looking.

The Jurassic Coast is the only place on earth where rocks from the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous periods can be seen in one place, The area was granted World Heritage status in 2001 for its unique geology, geomorphology and palaeontology. The Jurassic Coast Trust is the independent charity responsible for protecting and conserving its UNESCO World Heritage status.



Ammonite fossils recovered from rock split by youthful enthusiast

While we weren't lucky enough to have fossils fall at our feet, or to spot anything exceptional, we did meet a youngster who was happy to show us, with considerable pride, his excellent finds of the previous day. And he kindly let us photograph one of his best – a rock he had split to reveal a pair of fossil ammonites that literally sparkled in the sunshine. (Ammonites were marine animals belonging to the phylum Mollusca and the class Cephalopoda.) This was at Branscombe Beach, less than 15 kilometres from where we were staying at Lyme Regis.

Lyme Regis takes its ammonite and Jurassic Coast connections seriously. There are ammonite designs in its street lights, and attractive ammonite fossil reproductions in the footpath outside the Lyme Regis Museum. This is a small gem of a museum that informs us about the lively local history of Lyme Regis but which celebrates in particular the life and achievements of Mary Anning, who is remembered today as one of the greatest fossil hunters to have ever lived.

Mary was born in Lyme Regis in 1799. Her family was poor, and she had no formal training but she made spectacular discoveries: she was with her older brother in 1811 when they found the skull of what looked like a crocodile. Over the following year, Mary dug out the first complete skeleton of an ichthyosaur ever found. In 1823, Mary found the first ever plesiosaur (another type of marine reptile from the Jurassic period), which is now on display at the Natural History Museum in London. Over her lifetime Mary built up considerable knowledge and respect within the scientific community; her work was extremely important to paleontology (the scientific study of ancient life).

The Lyme Regis Museum has a small but stunning fossil display which includes molluscs. Although the museum itself does not sell fossils, we discovered shops nearby that had locally found treasures at reasonable prices and we just indulged ourselves by buying one or two.

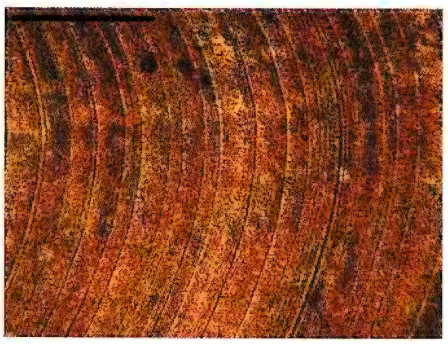
The Ming Passion and *Artica islandica*

Bert van Tiggele

The Ming Passion is a performance by the theatre company VONK in the Netherlands. This performance is based on the true story about a bivalve shellfish named *Arctica islandica,* Linnaeus,1767, which was dredged in 2006[1].

The performance makes it clear that the shellfish was frozen and upon examination by scientists the age was determined to be 507 years old.

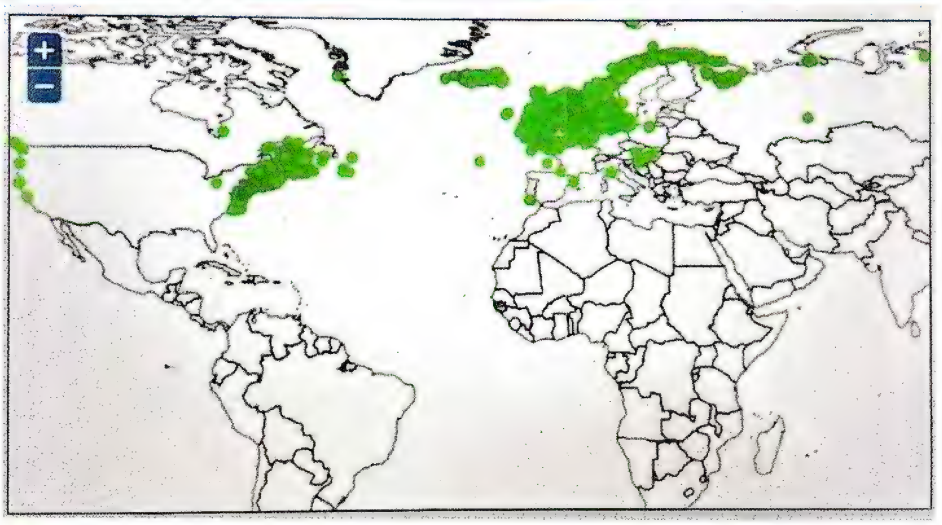
***Arctica islandica* Linneaus, 1767. Vestresand,. Lofoten, Norway. 06-1996. H 70mm. W 83.5mm. Coll. Bert van Tiggele.**



Growth lines on the shell of an *Arctica islandica*.valve. The black line represents 0.3mm (Author provided).

Scientists also wanted to examine the annual growth lines of the shell to obtain information about climate change. To do this, as it turned out, they killed the oldest shellfish in the world. In fact, as is now known, the species is determined as the longest-lived animal known on Earth.

[1] REF #: 081294, dredged, latitude; 66 31' 59" N, Longitude 18 11' 74 W / Iceland, Station 805AD03



WoRMS - Documented distribution present in aphia/obis/gbfi/idigbio, for *Arctica islandica*

The shellfish was named Ming – after the dynasty that ruled China between 658 and 380 BC.

Initially, scientists determined the age of the shell to be 405 years, and this was included in the Guinness Book of World Records. Later, after further investigation using Carbon-14, Ming turned out to be 507 years old. This was corroborated by counting the growth lines on both the exterior and interior of the valves. Useful data was also obtained indicating variable climatic periods throughout Ming's life.

Back to the Ming Passion performance where the question asked was: "*Is it acceptable to kill a shellfish that has lived for so long, for scientific research*?"

That same question needs to be asked, and answered, for the live taking of "interesting" rare species by us, merely because we can and like to have them?

A cautious attitude toward dealing with anything that lives on our planet seems increasingly necessary. Climate change is already having a significant impact on what lives and what dies. Time to think!

Some information about *Arctica islandica*

It is a large, rather common bivalve native to cold waters of the North Atlantic. It inhabits muddy to sandy bottoms, from sub-tidal to 150m. It is taken commercially as a food source.

Literature:

David Reynolds, Ian Hall and James Scourse What. December 07,2016. "500 year old clams can tell us about climate change".
ScienceNordic. November 6, 2013. New record: World's oldest animal is 507 years old.
Tyler-Walters, H. & Sabatini, M. 2017. Arctica islandica, Icelandic cyprine. Marine Life Information Network: Biology and Sensitivity Key Information. Reviews, [on- line]. Plymouth: Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom. DOI https://dx.doi.org/10.17031/marlinsp.1519.2
NMV-Newsletter, No: 05-2024. Information about: "The Ming Passion", by VONK, 27 March 2024.
Witbaard, R. (1997). Tree of the sea: The use of the internal growth lines in the shell of *Arctica islandica* (Bivalvia, Mollusca) for the retrospective assessment of marine environmental change. [Thesis fully internal (DIV), University of Groningen]. s.n.

First Matariki Holiday

Jill Burnet

In 2022 for the first time there was an official public holiday celebrating Matariki – the Maori New Year. That year it was on Friday 24 June, just after the winter solstice. This seemed to us to be a good occasion for a field trip – the weather is fine as often as not and the tides were right for Onehunga Bay, which we hadn't been to for a while but is often an interesting place. It was the Club's fourth trip there.

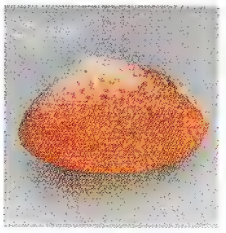
The Club's first trip there was on Anzac Day, Wednesday 25 April 1990. Before we went, Jenny Raven made a map of the area dividing it into three zones – inner harbour, Onehunga Bay, and open coast, and members were asked to collect or note every species of shell they saw in each zone. Don Watson brought his boat, we had a great turnout of members and over the next few months the shells found were identified and the results were published in *Cookia* Vol 6 No 3.

The second trip was held exactly a year later on Anzac Day, 1991. This was the trip when half of us walked from Onehunga Bay to Onepoto Bay, and the rest walked in the opposite direction. It is well remembered by all who went, and Kris Woods says that it was her first outing with the Shell Club.

On Anzac Day, 2002 we returned to Onehunga Bay. Members enjoyed the outing, though the shells weren't so exciting - Judy Hardie collected seaweed for her garden rather than shells.

And twenty years later on Matariki 2022, we visited Onehunga Bay again. After three weeks of terrible weather the day was fine, rather overcast but with little wind. There were plenty of shells, dominated by *Maoricolpus roseus*, but amongst these there were other, more interesting species. The shells were generally clean, fresh looking and not eroded. After a good search on Onehunga Bay, we drove on towards Kaitawa, and here again we found more than we expected. Alison Rusbridge held up a lovely brittlestar, I saw a piece of old rubber with one side totally covered by goose barnacles. Jenny Raven picked up a *Maurea trigris,* which would have been lovely if not broken. There were some stunning, shiny *Haliotis virginea*. We did find some species which were not on the list for Onehunga Bay, and these were:

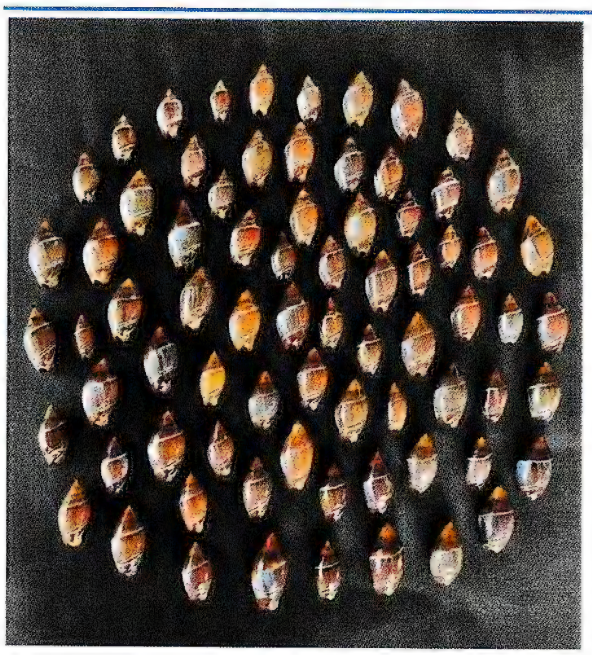
Pecten novaezelandiae Cardita distorta, Oxyperas elongatum, Gari stangeri, Zemysina globus Dosina crebra, Emarginula striatula, Trichosirius inornatus, Cominella virgata

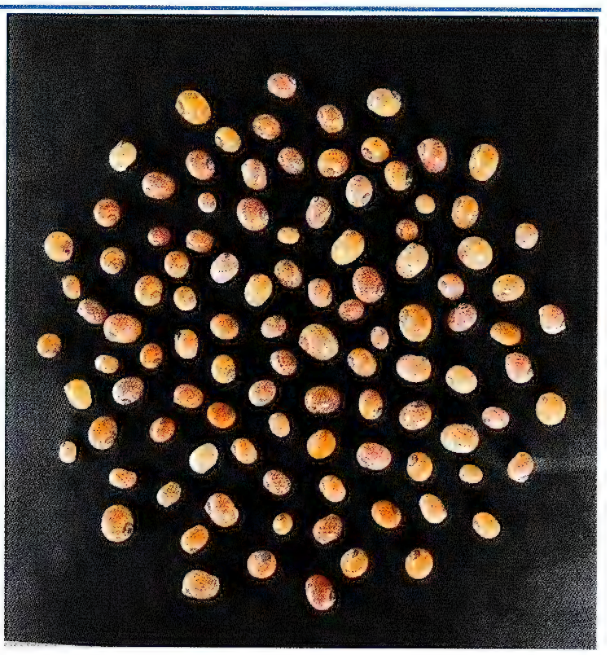


***Oxyperas elongatum* (Quoy & Gaimard, 1835)**

Washup at Waikanae

Kris Woods





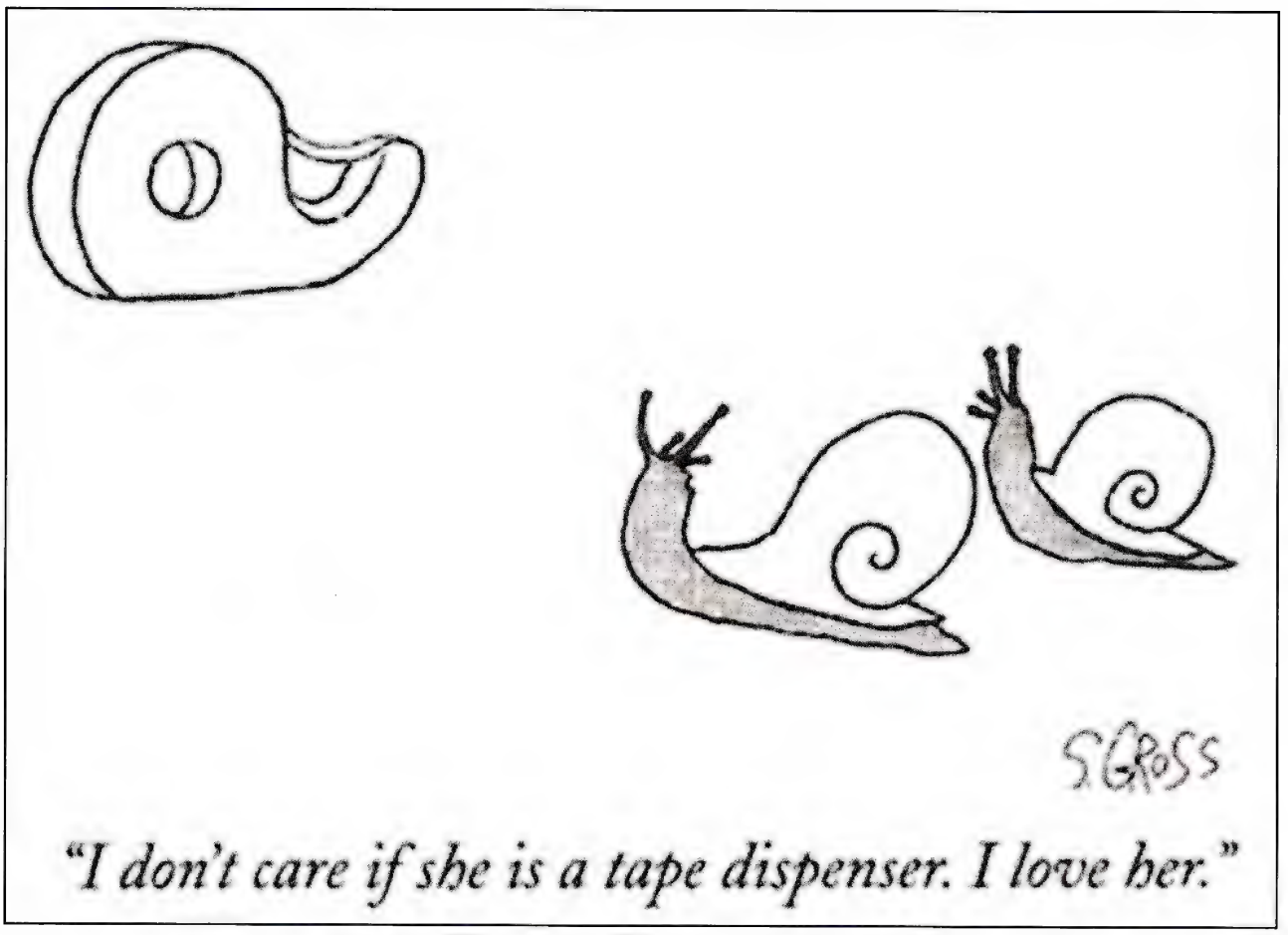
These photos depict a small sample of a very large washup of empty and mostly mature ***Amalda australis* (G.B. Sowerby 1, 1830)** ranging in size from 23- 38mm (left). Also, empty and mostly immature ***Tanea zelandica* (Quoy & Gaimard, 1832) ranging** in size from 10-22mm (right).

The washup was on a stretch of approximately eighty metres of low tide sand at Waikanae Beach near the Waikanae River Mouth, 15 July 2023. In all our many years of visiting Waikanae this is the first time Roger and I have seen either of these species washed up in such large quantities.

Does this look familiar?

That's a nice shell. And that one and there. Difficult to stop once started isn't it. Yes, it is!

[Ed: Cartoon spotted in *Volkskrant,* a Dutch newspaper, by Bert van Tiggele – who couldn't resist passing it on for *Cookia*]



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About *Cookia*

Cookia has been the annual journal of the Wellington Shell Club since 1976. Prior, the Wellington Shell Club published a Circular (1956-1965) and then a Bulletin (1967-1975) as well as occasional Study Notes on families of molluscs. Copies of *Cookia* more than 10 years old are available as a PDF on the website. Contact any committee member to request back copies or copies of articles (charges may apply).

The editors strive to attain a high quality of publication and careful fact-checking. The scope of articles is intended to reflect the differing specialties, levels of interest and experience within the club. We hope all members will be able to contribute should they wish. We welcome both scientific and non-scientific articles, opinion pieces, photos, drawings and poems, and articles not directly related to shells or shell collecting so long as they have some relevance.

Contributions are welcomed. Editorial policies and formatting guidelines for anyone considering submitting articles for future editions are available on the website, or consult the editors. Photos or drawings provided should be of a high resolution, supplied as individual files and not embedded into text. Unless of an *in situ* individual, an assortment of specimens in one shot or an artful context, it is preferred that specimens are photographed at 90° to the height/length axis of the shell, with apertural views of gastropod species preferred. Multiple views, angles or images of the same specimen are appreciated.

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30 species of Tateidae from New Zealand

(Except for those marked with an asterisk all are restricted to tight geographic areas – in some cases, a single cave system)

1 *Obtusopyrgus alpinus* Haase, 2008 *

2 *Obtusopyrgus farri* Verhaegen & Haase, 2021

3 *Rakiurapyrgus cresswelli* (Climo, 1974)

4 *Meridiopyrgus pupiformis* Haase, 2008

5 *Meridiopyrgus murihiku* Haase, 2008

6 *Tongapyrgus kohitatea* Haase, 2008

7 *Leptopygus manneringi* (Climo, 1974)

8 *Halopyrgus pupoides* (Hutton, 1882) *

9 *Kushelita mica* Climo, 1974

10 *Potamopyrgus troglodytes* (Climo, 1974)

11 *Potamopyrgus oppidanus* Haase, 2008

12 *Hadopyrgus anops* Climo, 1974

13 *Hadopyrgus expositus* Haase, 2008

14 *Catapyrgus jami* Verhaegen & Haase, 2021

15 *Catapyrgus fraterculus* Haase, 2008

16 *Catapyrgus manneringi* Haase, 2008

17 ***Catapyrgus soroius*** **Haase, 2008**

18 ***Opacuincola caeca*** **Ponder, 1966**

19 ***Opacuincola favus*** **Haase, 2008**

20 ***Opacuincola cervicesmadentes*** **Haase, 2008**

21 ***Opacuincola ignorata*** **Haase, 2008**

22 ***Opacuincola roscoei*** **Haase, 2008**

23 ***Opacuincola eduardstraussi*** **Haase, 2008**

24 ***Opacuincola lisannea*** **Verhaegen & Haase, 2021**

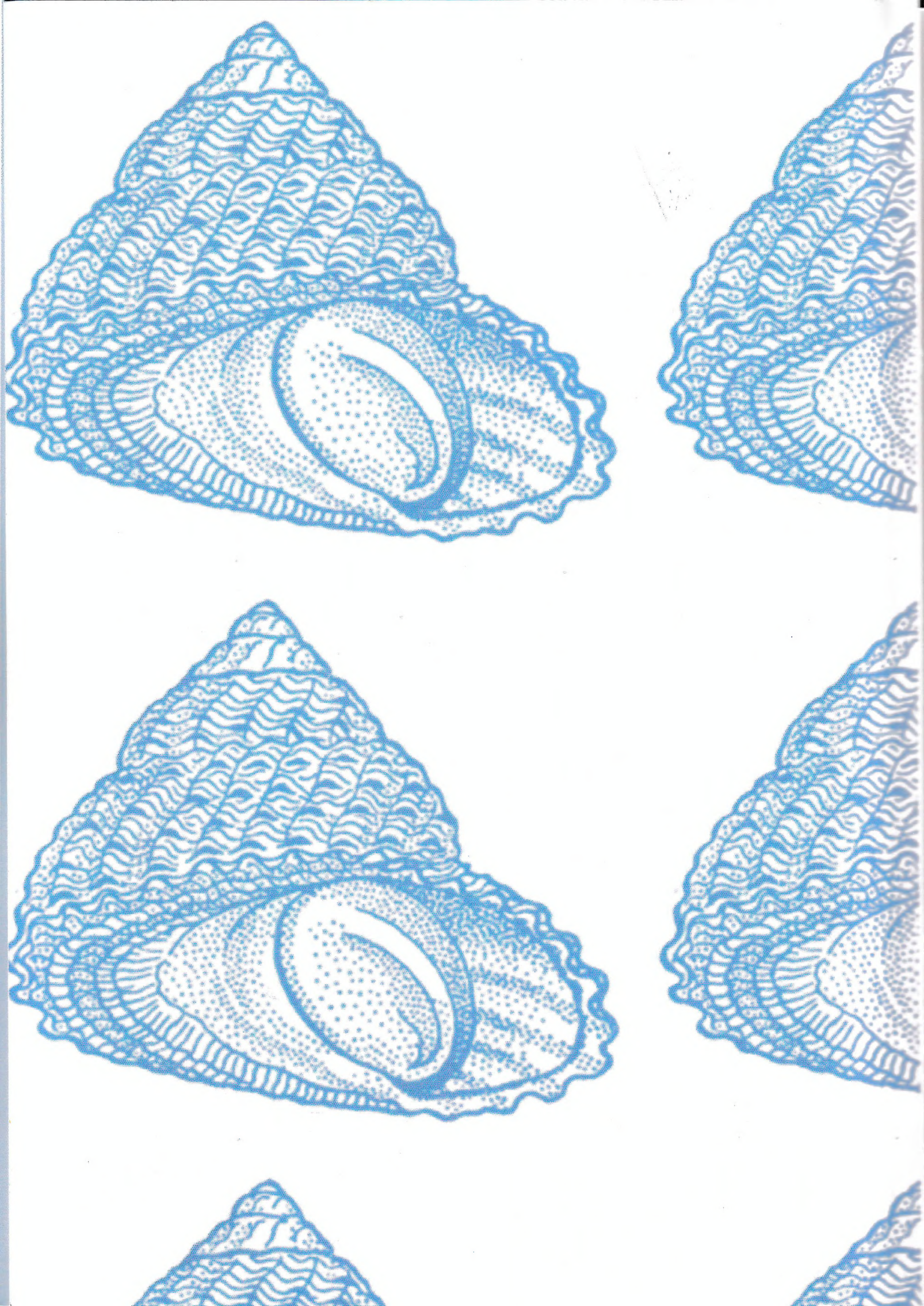
25 ***Opacuincola mete*** **Haase, 2008**

26 ***Opacuincola abradeta*** **Haase, 2008**

27 ***Opacuincola dulcinella*** **Haase, 2008**

28 ***Opacuincola lentesferens*** **Haase, 2008**

29 ***Sororopyrgus kutukutu*** **Haase, 2008**

30 ***Platypyrgus nelsonensis*** **(Climo, 1977)**

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